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THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES

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THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES

Sketches from Early Church History

BY

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"I have considered the days of old: and the years that are past. . . . I will remember the works of the Lord: and call to mind thy wonders of old time."

PS. LXXVII. 5, 11.

PREFACE

IN view of the appeal to antiquity which the late Archbishop Maclagan called "the very keynote of the Church of England," it is desirable that every Churchman should have some knowledge of the early history of the Church. The revision of the Prayer Book Calendar, which has added Black-Letter Days commemorating the most notable of the Church's heroes of the early centuries, will lead many to ask who these were and what they did. There are comparatively few who have access to original sources, or to the many Church histories which have been compiled from them, or who, if these were accessible, would have the leisure and the inclination to study them.

It was in order to furnish facilities for this that the following notes were prepared. Most of them appeared first in the monthly Sunday-school Magazine *The Teacher's Assistant*, and several persons who read them there expressed a wish that they might be gathered together and published in a more permanent form.

It is only a collection of sketches, but those who wish a more complete history will find it in larger works. The outlines, however, I venture to think, will be found to be correctly drawn, and I have endeavoured in each case to give sufficient detail to make the sketch intelligible.

I have not thought it necessary to cite authorities, but the materials have been gathered from the best sources available, and I have not hesitated at times to use the very words of the writers to whom I have had recourse.

If the reception of this experimental volume seems to warrant it, it may be possible to deal with the history of succeeding periods on similar lines.

F. W. V.

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THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES

CHAPTER I

What is the Church?

THE history of the Church begins with the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. As Adam was first formed of earthly matter, and then "the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"; so the Church was formed of weak men of like passions with ourselves, and as they tarried in Jerusalem after the Ascension, till they should be endued with power from on high, the breath of God—a rushing, mighty wind—came upon them and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The Church awoke; a living organism, endued with a life which should abide forever. Its body was of the earth, earthy; but its life was from above. And as all the members of our bodies are centred in the brain, from which the nerves go out to every part, so the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is centred in Him who is its Head, and the Spirit of Christ extends to every member, and the mystery by which Christ is in us and we in Him is accomplished by the Holy Ghost.

The study of Church History, then, is the study of the way in which the work of Christ has been carried on by His Holy Spirit acting through the Church, which is His special sphere of influence.

"So age by age, and year by year,
His grace was handed on:
And still the Holy Church is here,
Although her Lord is gone."

From the days of the Apostles it was laid down as a condition for those seeking salvation that they should enter into the fellowship of the Church by holy baptism, and so put on Christ. Then "they continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." So we may in general terms define the Church, as we find it in the New Testament, as the company of those who accepted Christ as Lord, who held the Faith, and who made use of the sacraments which Christ ordained.

The Preparation of the World

Though it is true that the history of the Church begins at Pentecost, yet in another sense it begins with the beginning of all history. For if we read history aright, we see behind it the controlling power of Him who ruleth over all from the beginning, guiding the nations and ordering all things for the fulfilment of His eternal purposes.

Scientists tell us that there were long ages of development leading up to and preparing for the coming of man; and so there were long ages of human history during which, by "divers portions and in divers manners," the world was made ready for the coming of Christ; and it was only when the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son.

Everyone is familiar with the idea that the Old Testament dispensation was a preparation for Christ, and that the law found its fulfilment in the Gospel; but there are many other ways as well in which the world was prepared. Let us now note a few of them:

1. The destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews to Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar was not only a just punishment brought upon a disobedient and gainsaying people, but it was the beginning of the Dispersion of the Jews, which was an important factor in the evangelization of the Gentiles. Every commercial centre came to have its Jewish colony.

2. Then, when some of the Jews returned after the decree of Cyrus, the Temple was rebuilt and became a centre to which the twelve tribes scattered abroad went up to keep the appointed feasts, "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and

Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers from Rome, Cretes and Arabians."

3. And nearly all these had a common language, for, as a result of the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Greek language was carried everywhere. Every educated person spoke and wrote in Greek, and it became the language of commerce and continued under the Roman Empire. The Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, in what is known as the *Septuagint*, and this version, from which St. Paul quotes continually, was the Bible of the Jews of the Dispersion. It was in Greek that the books of the New Testament were written, and almost all the early Christian writers wrote in Greek until the end of the second century.

4. The Roman Empire, which was dominant in the early days of the Church, served its purpose in making peace throughout the world by bringing rival nations into subjection, and in opening up great imperial roads throughout the length and breadth of the land, which were as perfect as engineers could make them, and many of which exist to the present day. Thus travelling was easier, quicker and safer than it ever had been before.

5. Greek Philosophy, too, especially the Platonic and Stoic, played an important part in preparing the world for Christ, for it shattered the belief in the "Undenominational Paganism" of the old religions, which were in no sense schools of virtue, and it set before men a high standard of morals, though it could give them no power to live up to it.

Sources of Information

Our knowledge of the first age of the Church is somewhat limited. The Acts of the Apostles tell us nothing but the names of the greater number of the twelve. We learn from this source something about the two sons of Zebedee and rather more about St. Peter; but more than half of the book is taken up with the conversion and labours of St. Paul.

Hegesippus, who lived in the latter half of the second century, is sometimes called the father of Church History, but unfortunately his work is only known to us through the quotations and references of later writers, and we have no systematic history of the Church earlier than that of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, written in the first half of the

fourth century; but this is most valuable. If he had to go a long way back to gather up materials, we shall realize that this task was not a hopeless one, when we reflect that in Canadian history Champlain, Cartier and de Monts are separated from us by half a century more than the Apostles were from Eusebius. Then Eusebius was a careful and diligent student, and he had at hand the valuable library of Pamphilus at Cæsarea, in which was probably the best collection of works of Christian writers then extant. Many of these works have been lost and we know nothing of them except through Eusebius. Whatever he sets down as history may at least be deemed worthy of consideration; though undoubtedly he was at times misled, as many modern historians have been, by similarity of names and inaccurate traditions.

But, in spite of the many writings that have been lost, there is still a remarkable wealth of early Christian writings from which we may gather interesting facts concerning the ages to which they belong; and it is surprising how many of these have been recovered in recent years.

Some light, too, has been thrown upon the primitive Church by archæological research, particularly in the Catacombs of Rome, the ruined cities of Asia Minor and the sands of the Egyptian deserts.

What became of the First Disciples?

It is evident that there was a general dispersion of the disciples to preach the Gospel throughout the world soon after the Council of Jerusalem, recorded in Acts 15. This council, A.D. 50, was presided over by "James the Lord's brother," called from his blameless life "James the Just," who remained as Bishop of Jerusalem until his death A.D. 62. Eusebius speaks of him as the son of Joseph, which accords with the tradition, preserved in one of the apocryphal gospels, that St. Joseph was a widower and had children before he married the Mother of the Lord. It cannot be maintained, therefore, that this James was one of the twelve: but he was the writer of the General Epistle of St. James. Hegesippus tells us that he was slain by the Jews, being cast down from the top of the temple wall and afterwards despatched by a blow from a fuller's club, as he was praying for his murderers.

St. Peter, according to Eusebius, was for seven years Bishop of Antioch, and some time later he went to Rome, where he suffered in the persecution under Nero, and was crucified, at his own request, with his head downward, because he was not worthy to die as his Lord had died. Irenæus, writing in the latter half of the second century, tells us that St. Peter and St. Paul together appointed Linus as first Bishop of Rome, and for centuries the two Apostles were associated together in a common festival, June 29th, which is the traditional anniversary of their martyrdom.

St. John for some years exercised superintendence over the Church at Ephesus, where he had to contend with teachers of false doctrine. He was exiled for a time to the little island of Patmos in the Ægean Sea, but before this, according to Tertullian, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil at the Latin Gate of Rome, from which he came forth unhurt. This story is commemorated in our calendar on May 6th. St. John's death occurred in extreme old age about A.D. 100.

St. Bartholomew is said to have preached in India and Arabia, St. Andrew in Scythia, St. Philip in Hierapolis, St. Thaddæus in Edessa, St. Thomas in Parthia, St. Matthew and St. Matthias in Ethiopia ; but these legends are not altogether reliable.

There is a strong tradition which assigns the founding of the Church at Alexandria to St. Mark.

The Gospels do not give us the names of any of the seventy, though without doubt some of them must have done important work in evangelization. Eusebius says that Matthias and Barnabas were two of them. We have good reason to believe that St. Paul after his first imprisonment fulfilled his desire to journey to Spain, and perhaps also paid another visit to the East. After a second imprisonment, in which he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, he suffered martyrdom in the same persecution as St. Peter, being beheaded at Rome about A.D. 64.

Early Christian Writings

The first age of the Church was not abundant in literature. Outside the books of the New Testament, very few of the writings of the Apostolic Age have come down to us. Not

even have we all that the Apostles wrote; for St. Paul's first letter to Corinth (1 Cor. 5: 9) has been lost, and probably a great many other letters as well. But there are some writings extant of Christians who lived when the Apostles were preaching, and although they are unquestionably inferior to the books of the New Testament in spiritual force and depth, they throw some interesting sidelights upon the Church of the first ages.

The Didache

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, sometimes called by its Greek name *Didache*, is thought by some to be the earliest of these, though others assign it the middle of the second century. It is a sort of Church Manual, illustrating the life of the Jewish Syrian Christians in the first century. It does not profess to come from the Apostles themselves, but to give such teaching and directions as they would approve. Although several times referred to by early writers, the book was lost for centuries, until it was discovered by a Greek scholar, Bryennios, in a monastic library at Constantinople and published to the world in 1883. The first part telling of the Two Ways—the way of life and the way of death—seems to be intended as a practical instruction for those who were preparing for baptism. Then come directions concerning baptism, fasting and prayer, Holy Communion, Christian teachers, the Lord's Day, the choice of men for the ministry and the second coming of Christ. Baptism is always to be administered in the name of the Holy Trinity, in running water by preference, though it is sufficient to pour water three times on the head, and the candidates are to fast before the ceremony.

The Lord's Prayer is to be used three times a day, and it is noticeable that the form given has a doxology slightly differing from that given in St. Matthew's Gospel.

The Eucharist (and such an early use of the term is notable), is not to be given to the unbaptized, and apparently it was not yet separated from the Agape or Love Feast. It is to be observed every Lord's Day, after confession of sins. The last chapter is an exhortation to prepare for the appearing of Christ, when He shall come with all His saints.

The Epistle of Barnabas

The so-called Epistle of Barnabas is a letter written probably soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70), but it does not bear the name either of the writer or of those to whom it is addressed. In the second century it was accepted as the work of the Apostle Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, and it is included in the Sinaitic Manuscript of the New Testament, which dates from the first half of the fourth century. Yet it is not a work of very great spiritual or intellectual strength, and the prevailing opinion of to-day is that St. Barnabas was not its author.

In subject matter it may be compared to the Epistle to the Hebrews; but, instead of recognizing the Jewish religion as a preparatory discipline for the coming of Christ, it sees nothing good in the old dispensation, and its standpoint is decidedly anti-Jewish. It is apparently written for those who are in danger of overestimating the ordinances of the law as means of grace, and not merely shadows of good things to come. In spite of many trivialities the epistle contains some passages of great beauty.

The Epistle of St. Clement

Another letter of considerable importance, which dates from near the end of the first century, is the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. Like the Epistle of Barnabas, it does not bear the name of the writer, but all ancient testimony assigns it to Clement (or Clemens), who is said to have been the third Bishop of Rome. The name is not an uncommon one, and the theory that the writer is the same Clement mentioned by St. Paul (Phil. 4: 3) is not generally held now. The purpose of the letter was to allay the factious spirit in Corinth, which was similar to that of St. Paul's day. There was apparently an attempt on the part of some to turn out certain of the clergy and put others in their places. This epistle is an earnest exhortation to peace and unity. It points out that the ministry is from the Lord, and not from men. The Apostles gave instructions to those

whom they appointed " that when these should fall asleep other approved men should succeed them in their ministry."

The most notable part of the epistle is the prayer with which it closes, which is thought to be the prayer used by St. Clement when he celebrated the Holy Communion, and which is a general intercession for rulers and governors, for sufferers, and for all sorts and conditions of men. In a negative way the epistle is interesting as showing a lack of any assumption of papal authority. So far from claiming any special jurisdiction as the successor of St. Peter, the writer does not mention his name or his office. It is simply an epistle of the Church at Rome to the Church at Corinth, and, as has been well said, its exhortations " are no more than might in reversed circumstances have been addressed from Corinth to Rome."

The Shepherd of Hermas

There is another writing belonging to this period, which was considered of sufficient importance to be translated into several languages and was held in such high esteem that it was read in church for a century or more, as the Apocrypha is now read, " for example of life and instruction of manners." The writer, who may have been esteemed as a prophet, but who certainly did not consider himself as belonging to the regular ministry, was a brother of Pius, who was Bishop of Rome in the middle of the second century. The book has been called, not inaptly, *The Pilgrim's Progress* of that time. It consists of *Visions*, *Commandments* and *Similitudes*, and it inculcates wholesome lessons on repentance, patience and purity of life. The teaching on the subject of divorce in the second book is the simplest and strongest in any early Christian writer.

In the *Visions* the Church is represented as a great tower built four square upon the waters of baptism. The stones are brought from all sources. Some are good and fitted to take their places. Some are too short, or cracked, or ill-shapen, and these are thrown aside. If, however, they repent while the tower is in building they will be accepted.

There are a number of phrases which must have fixed

themselves in the minds of those who heard them, such as : " Cease praying continually for your sins ; pray for righteousness " ; " If you come to imagine that the Commandments cannot be kept by man, you will not keep them."

CHAPTER II

The Days of Persecution

OUR Blessed Lord Himself said to His disciples that in the world they should have tribulation, and that affliction and persecution should arise because of the word, and this proved true from the very first. Both Jews and Gentiles were opposed to the religion of Christ, and did their utmost to stamp it out. We see something of the hatred of the Jews in the Acts of the Apostles, but the worst persecution which the Church had to endure at the Jews' hands was during the revolt under Bar-cochba, when the Jews, following the lead of this "Son of a Star" (in allusion to Balaam's prophecy, Num. 24 : 17) tried to throw off the Roman yoke. The war was a bloody one. Thousands were slain ; Bar-cochba was taken and put to death, A.D. 135 ; Jerusalem was destroyed and the new Roman city of Ælia Capitolina built upon its ruins, and the Jews were forbidden, on pain of death, to come within sight of the place. When the insurrection began it was regarded by the Jews as a great national movement, like the revolt of the Maccabees, and every loyal Jew was called upon to support it. But the Christian Jews could not, of course, follow one who pretended to be the Messiah, and so they were regarded as renegades and subjected to cruel punishment. And when the Jews could no longer practise violent persecution against their Christian brethren they circulated calumnies against them to injure them in the eyes of the Gentiles.

Then began what appeared at first to be an unequal and hopeless struggle of the Church against the Roman Empire. The religion of the Romans was fast going to decay. It had never been a moral force, but it was officially recognized, and it could not look with favour upon the worship of a God not sanctioned by the state. The Jews were tolerated

as long as they kept to themselves and did not interfere with the state religion. But Christianity was essentially aggressive, and besides it did not pretend to be a national religion. It was a part of the Roman policy to sanction the gods of conquered nations, and there is no doubt that the authorities would have been willing to set up a statue of Jesus in the Pantheon. This would have been like adding the name of a new saint to the calendar. But Christ would not share His glory with others. Every knee must bow to Him and every tongue confess Him ; neither was there salvation in any other. Such teaching naturally aroused jealousy on the part of the adherents of the old religion. It was sacrilege to speak against the gods of the empire, and the full penalty of sacrilege was to be burnt or crucified or thrown to wild beasts. Then the Christians met in secret, at night or in the early morning, and none but the initiated were present at their meetings. Why else was this but that they indulged in abominations which could not bear the light ? There were no statues of gods to be seen, therefore they were atheists. They had been overheard speaking of mystic food, and of eating flesh and drinking blood, therefore they practised magical rites and were murderers and cannibals. These are the stories that were circulated. So when any misfortune occurred, as an earthquake, a fire, flood or pestilence, which seemed to indicate the wrath of the gods, the popular cry arose : " The Christians to the lions ! "

When Trajan was Emperor

Trajan, who came to the throne A.D. 98, was one of the best of the Roman Emperors, but his efforts to uphold order and discipline in the empire involved the Christians, especially in the Eastern provinces, in persecution. It happened in this way : Trajan appointed Pliny the Younger, a lawyer of integrity and distinction, to govern the province of Bithynia, to the south of the Black Sea. Pliny was a religious man, according to Roman ideas, and he found, in going about his province, that the temples of the gods were almost deserted, while those who supplied animals for sacrifice complained that their trade was ruined. It was learned upon enquiry that the reason was that so many had become Christians.

The Governor felt that this was a state of things which could not be tolerated, and the Christians who were brought before him he summarily executed. Many, of course, lapsed back to heathenism, or at least offered worship to the national gods to save their lives, but there were so many who were unyielding that he thought it best to inquire into their conduct and worship and refer the matter to the Emperor. To his surprise investigation showed that none of the atrocious charges popularly made against the Christians could be sustained. They met together before daybreak on a fixed day and sang hymns to Christ as God; they bound themselves by an oath not to commit robbery or adultery or to break their word, or they met for a harmless meal. Two deaconesses were examined by torture but revealed nothing more, and he concluded that their superstition was as ridiculous as their attachment to it was extraordinary. He asked the Emperor then what he should do. The rescript of Trajan was to the effect that, as the number of Christians was apparently so great, they should not be sought out, but any who were denounced and convicted and would not clear themselves by blaspheming Christ and adoring the gods must be punished

Ignatius the Martyr

There was also a persecution of Christians in Trajan's reign in Antioch, the chief city of the East. How it started or how extensive it was history does not say, but amongst its victims was one noted person, Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, who, according to Eusebius, was the second in succession to St. Peter. We know nothing certainly of the early life of Ignatius. The tradition which makes him a disciple of St. John is not improbable, and he may also have known St. Peter and St. Paul. We can only judge of his character and work by his writings, which were highly esteemed in the early Church.

It was in A.D. 110, or thereabouts, that Ignatius was seized, tried and condemned to be thrown to wild beasts in the Flavian amphitheatre, commonly known as the Colosseum at Rome. Of the particulars nothing is known but what can be gathered from his letters; for the legendary accounts are of no value. He set out from Antioch in charge of a guard of ten soldiers, whom he

speaks of as "leopards," apparently from the cruelty with which they treated him, and his whole journey he speaks of as a conflict with wild beasts. On his way he received deputations from the Churches of Asia, wrote letters and despatched messengers. A halt was made at Philadelphia and another at Smyrna, where he met his dear friend Polycarp, the bishop of that city, the Bishops of Ephesus, Magnesia and Tralles, and other friends, and from here he wrote three epistles, to the Ephesians, the Magnesians and the Trallians, to be carried by their respective bishops, and one to the Romans to tell them of his coming and urge them to do nothing to prevent his martyrdom. A halt was again made at Troas, where they had to take ship across to Europe, and here also he met friends and wrote letters to the Philadelphians and the Smyrnæans and to Polycarp. When he came over to Philippi the kindness shown him by the brethren there recalled the good offices of that Church to St. Paul some sixty years before. Of the rest of the journey we know nothing, but his death made a deep impression upon the Church. His festival is observed on October 17th, the day of his death, and he holds a high place of honour in the Church of the East to the present day.

The Ignatian Epistles

The epistles which Ignatius wrote on his way to martyrdom are among the most important of the early Christian writings, both from their doctrinal teaching and from the light they throw upon Church order in the beginning of the second century. Their insistence upon the necessity of the threefold ministry is so emphatic that some of the French reformers in the sixteenth century, who had broken away from the episcopacy, did their best to discredit them; but their genuineness has been placed beyond a doubt.

The letters are very similar in form to St. Paul's epistles. Take, for example, the salutation of the Epistle to the Trallians:—

"Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto her that is beloved by God the Father of Jesus Christ; to the Holy Church which is in Tralles of Asia, elect and worthy of God, having peace in flesh and spirit through the passion of Jesus Christ, Who is our hope through resurrection

unto Him; which Church I also salute in the Divine fulness, after the apostolic fashion, and wish her abundant greeting."

The letters are marked by a strong enthusiasm throughout. He writes to the Romans: "Let me be given to the wild beasts; for through them I can attain unto God. I am God's wheat, and am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread."

The episcopate is to him the centre of unity. "Shun divisions as the beginning of evil," he writes to the Smyrnæans. "Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop, or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be."

To the Philadelphians he writes: "Be careful to observe one Eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup of union in His blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow-servants) that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it after God."

To the Magnesians: "Neither do ye anything without the bishop and the presbyters. And attempt not to think anything right for yourselves apart from others; but let there be one prayer in common, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and in joy unblamable, which is in Jesus Christ, than Whom there is nothing better."

To the Trallians he says: "Apart from these [bishop, presbyters and deacons] there is not even the name of a Church."

It is clear from these epistles that in the early years of the second century at least the episcopate was widely spread and firmly established throughout Asia Minor. Bishop Lightfoot, one of the greatest scholars of the last generation, who made a special study of the Apostolic Fathers, said: "The testimony in favour of this spread of the episcopate is more abundant and more varied than for any other institution or event during this period, so far as I recollect."

We learn from Ignatius, too, something of the evils with which the Church had to contend in those early days. He warns his readers against those who hold strange

doctrine, who disregard Sunday, the day of the resurrection, who abstain from the Eucharist, "because they allow not that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins." He maintains that if the reality of our Lord's human body and His bodily suffering is destroyed (which is an error taught by some at the present day) the faith is wholly overthrown: "Be ye fully persuaded concerning the birth and the passion and the resurrection—for these things were certainly done by Jesus Christ our hope"; and again: "If these things were done by our Lord in semblance, then am I also a prisoner in semblance." Ignatius may have been, as some contend, an over-zealous enthusiast, but at all events he gives us a valuable picture of the belief and practice of the Church of his time, and the way in which his memory has been cherished, especially in his own country, ever since is an evidence that he truly represented the Christian sentiment.

St. Polycarp of Smyrna

Polycarp, notable for his apostolic training, his venerable age and his holiness of life, was born, probably of Christian parents, about A.D. 70, and in his early days came under the teaching of St. John at Ephesus. He was a personal friend of Ignatius of Antioch, and it is to him we owe the collection of the Ignatian Epistles. He was for many years Bishop of Smyrna and may have been appointed to that office by St. John himself, as he was about thirty years of age at the time of the Apostle's death. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, the greatest of the fathers of the second century, was one of his disciples. Ignatius on his way to martyrdom charged Polycarp to stand firm, as indeed he did, holding jealously the things which he had been taught by St. John.

About the time of the martyrdom of Ignatius, Polycarp wrote a letter to the Philippians, who had shown kindness to Ignatius and other Christian prisoners on their way to Rome. It is a letter of fatherly counsel, much in the style of the letters of Ignatius, and it is remarkable for the free use it makes of New Testament language. It quotes from the Gospels, St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John and the Acts.

In his old age Polycarp visited Rome to confer with the bishop, Anicetus, as to the time of keeping Easter. It had

been the custom of St. John and the other Apostles, he said, to observe the day of the Jewish Passover, the 14th Nisan, as the anniversary of the Passion, without regard to the day of the week: but Anicetus said that his predecessors had always kept the Passion on a Friday and the Sunday following as the anniversary of the Resurrection. Though they did not come to any agreement on this matter, their relations were most friendly and, at the invitation of Anicetus, Polycarp celebrated the Eucharist in his place.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp.

Not long after his return home a persecution arose at Smyrna at a time of popular excitement, when some festival was being kept, and eleven Christians were thrown to the wild beasts. Then there was a clamour for Polycarp. At the advice of friends he retired to a farm-house a few miles away, but he was soon found, and though he might have escaped, he said, "God's will be done." He ordered food to be set before his captors while he prayed, and afterwards went with them to the amphitheatre, which was filled with a howling mob. But a voice which seemed to come from heaven was heard in the midst of the din, "Polycarp, be strong and play the man."

He was set before the proconsul Quadratus, who bade him swear by the genius of Cæsar and say: "Away with the atheists!" "Curse Christ and I will let you go," the proconsul said, but the old man answered in memorable words, "Eighty-six years have I served Him and He never did me any wrong; how then can I revile Him Who saved me?"

The people then cried out for a lion to be let loose on him, but the days fixed by law for the games were now over and this could not be done; then they clamoured that he should be burned alive. The Jews were conspicuous in their zeal in gathering faggots for the fire. The venerable bishop was then tied to the stake and the wood piled about him, while he prayed and glorified God, using words strikingly like our *Gloria in excelsis*, and, as he uttered the final Amen, the fire was lighted, but the flames were caught by the wind and arched around him as if loath to injure him, and the mob called for the "beast-finisher" to put his knife in him, and so his sufferings were ended. All this

happened in the reign of Antonine "the good." The date of the martyrdom was February 23rd, A.D. 155, and it is described particularly in a letter from the Church at Smyrna to the Church at Philomelium written immediately after the event.

The Persecution at Lyons and Vienne

A terrible persecution broke out in Southern Gaul in A.D. 177, during the reign of "the noblest of the emperors," Marcus Aurelius, who issued an edict against "those who caused tumults by introducing new worships." We learn the particulars of it from a letter from "the servants of Christ living in Vienne and Lyons to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia," preserved by Eusebius. Lyons, where the bishop lived, was an important town and the residence of the imperial legate, and Vienne was a smaller town a few miles further down the Rhone.

The beginning of the trouble was an outburst of popular hatred at Lyons, when Christians were attacked and stoned in the streets and their houses plundered. The legate was absent from town at the time, but those who confessed themselves Christians were thrown into prison by the magistrates to await his arrival. Upon his return an inquiry was held and a young man of noble birth offered to act as their advocate, but he was immediately arrested and placed with the others. Strict search was then made for Christians and evidence was secured by torturing slaves.

One of those seized was the Bishop of Lyons, Pothinus, a venerable man of ninety years, who, when asked, "Who is the God of the Christians?" replied, "If thou art worthy thou shalt know." He was thereupon ordered to prison, but was so cruelly beaten and kicked by the crowd, in the presence of the legate, that he died two days afterwards.

According to one authority there were forty-eight who suffered martyrdom at that time. They were exhibited, a few every day, for the entertainment of the populace. Some were given to the wild beasts; others were cruelly flogged; others had red-hot plates of brass put upon the tender parts of their bodies; others were roasted in an iron chair. Ten yielded and denied the faith. One young girl

named Biblias first denied and then her courage revived and she confessed Christ and endured the torture. A poor slave girl named Blandina was the worst sufferer, and though her mistress was afraid she would yield, she displayed a constancy and endurance which astonished her persecutors, saying: "I am Christian, we do not do any wrong." She with her brother Ponticus, a lad of fifteen, were brought to the arena day after day to witness the sufferings of the others, and when their turn came, she encouraged her brother in his sufferings, and then, after being scourged, torn by beasts, burned with a hot iron and tossed by a bull, she was finally despatched with the sword. When all was over the bodies of the victims were heaped together for several days and then burned and the ashes cast into the Rhone, in mockery of the doctrine of the Resurrection. But nothing is more remarkable, perhaps, in connection with the whole incident than the gentle, tolerant, spirit which breathes through the whole of the letter which records it.

St. Justin Martyr

A proof of the strong growth of the Church, in the face of the severe persecution which it had to endure in the second and third centuries, is found in the number of men of education and intellectual ability who undertook to write in its defence. Some of these we know only by brief notices furnished by Eusebius, while the writings of others have come down to us. They wrote, for the most part, in Greek. Quadratus delivered his apology, probably to the Emperor Hadrian at Athens, and Aristides addressed his to Antoninus Pius, Hadrian's successor. Ariston, of Pella, a Jewish Christian (to whom the last twelve verses of St. Mark are ascribed in one ancient manuscript), wrote a defence of Christianity about A.D. 134, in the form of a dialogue between Jason, a Jewish Christian, and Papiscus, an Alexandrian Jew, laying chief stress upon the argument from prophecy.

The best known, however, of the Apologists is Justin Martyr, who lived between A.D. 114 and 165. In the account which he gives of his own life he calls himself a Samaritan, born at Neapolis, which was the ancient Shechem. He received a Greek education, and passed from

one school of philosophy to another in search of wisdom, which would satisfy the soul. The Stoics, the Peripatetics, the Platonists he tried in turn, but all in vain. At last, as he walked by the seashore, he encountered an old man who told him that only the prophets who were taught by the Spirit of God had seen the truth. He read and believed.

After this he still classed himself a philosopher, and invited men to his school and still wore his philosopher's cloak. He had found the true philosophy.

Before his conversion he had been struck with the steadfastness and courage with which Christians met persecution, and now he learned the secret of it and was able to imitate their courage. Going to Rome, the centre of the empire, he lectured and disputed in defence of the faith.

Besides his two *Apologies*, he wrote a *Dialogue with Trypho*, to show that the God of the Christians is the same as the God of the Jews and that Christians recognize the authority of the Old Testament. So full are Justin's writings of allusions to our Lord's life as recorded in the New Testament that it would be possible to reconstruct almost the whole gospel story from them ; but he is not careful to quote the words of the Gospels, for he lived at the time when the written Gospels were just beginning to take the place of the oral gospel.

His death was brought about by an accusation made against him probably by Crescens the Cynic philosopher whom he had convicted of ignorance. He and several others were brought before the prefect of the city, Rusticus, and commanded to sacrifice to the gods ; and after their refusal to do so they were beaten with rods and then beheaded.

Christian Worship in the Second Century

One of the things of peculiar interest in Justin's First Apology is the account which he gives of the Holy Communion for which, of course, the Christians met together every Lord's Day. Although none but the faithful were allowed to be present at this service, such scandalous stories were circulated about what took place at these secret meetings that Justin thought it best, without quoting

the words of the liturgy, to describe the service with some fulness of detail.

"On the day called Sunday," he says, "all gather in one place and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray and . . . when our prayer is ended bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgiving according to his ability, and the people express their assent by saying, Amen; and there is a distribution to each and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and a portion is sent to those who are absent by the deacons. And they also who are well-to-do and willing, give what each thinks fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word, all who are in need."

"And this food," he says, "is called amongst us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For we do not receive it as common bread and common drink, but . . . we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of Jesus who was made flesh."

Tatian

Another name that should be mentioned here is that of Tatian, a pupil of Justin's, though a few years later reckoned as a heretic. He came from Mesopotamia, and was well versed in Greek literature and philosophy, in which he found nothing to satisfy his soul. He was attracted as Justin had been, by the lofty tone and pure morality of the Christian Scriptures, but whether he became a Christian before he came under the influence of Justin is uncertain.

He spent several years at Rome, and while there he wrote *an Address to the Greeks*, in which he contrasts Christianity with the absurdities in which the Greeks professed to believe.

Tatian's most important work was his *Diatessaron*, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, which was a piecing together of the Gospels to form one continuous narrative. This book was not well known in the West, and probably was not completed until Tatian had returned to the East, sometime after Justin's death in A.D. 165. It was either originally written in Syriac or translated, for it was in use as a Gospel book in Syrian churches up to the fifth century, and Ephræm the Syrian wrote a commentary on it. For something like 1500 years, however, it was lost and was only recovered and given to the world again in 1888. Its importance arises from the fact that it proves that four Gospels were recognized as authoritative both in Rome in the East in the middle of the second century and that they were the same Gospels which we have to-day.

There have been many attacks upon the Fourth Gospel in modern times by men who said it must have been written later than St. John's time, but more than 95 per cent of this Gospel is incorporated in the *Diatessaron*, which begins with the opening words of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, etc." If Tatian used it without question his master Justin must have done the same, which means that it was accepted as authentic in the first half of the second century.

When he was no longer under the guidance of Justin, Tatian seems to have been carried away by his fondness for speculative thought. "Puffed up," says Irenæus, "by the thought of being a teacher, he composed his own type of doctrine," and we hear of him in connection with an ascetic sect which taught that it was wrong to drink wine, to eat flesh meat, or to marry, and had other extravagant ideas.

A Hundred Years of Growth

It is well to stop at this point and see how far the little band of Christians had succeeded in preaching the Gospel throughout all the world. The seed had found lodgement in almost every part of the Roman Empire. Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and probably Spain had heard the

glad tidings before St. Paul died. Then the Church spread gradually along the whole of Northern Africa and in Egypt at least as far south as Thebes and probably farther. It worked its way northward in Gaul, and it is uncertain just when it reached across to Roman Britain. It held the southern shore of the Black Sea and reached Mesopotamia and Persia, and tradition says parts of India as well.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, Rome, as the centre of the Empire, was the chief rallying-point for Christians. In the East Antioch held the chief place, but Ephesus and Smyrna were important centres, all three being Apostolic Sees, and next to these would come Alexandria, Carthage and Lyons. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

CHAPTER III

"There shall be False Teachers"

FROM the very first the Church has been "militant here on earth," not only from having to defend herself from enemies without, but from having to wrestle also with perversions of doctrine within. The Apostles met at Jerusalem to deal with those who said it was necessary to keep the law, and St. John speaks of the sect of the Nicolaitans, and of a prophetess whom he calls Jezebel. There were evidently two schools of thought within the Church, the one (consisting for the most part of those who were Jews by birth) tolerant of and inclined to the traditions of Judaism, and the other, with the knowledge that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, making little of the religion of the Old Testament, and forgetting that the "Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

In every age there are those to whom traditionalism appeals most strongly—walking in the old paths—and others to whom rationalism—unprejudiced searching for truth—appears the better way. These two tendencies in the early Church led to Ebionism on the one hand and Gnosticism on the other. Each of these was divided into different sects. The Ebionites took their name from a Hebrew word signifying "poor." They acknowledged Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and recognized that His Kingdom was not of this world, but they denied His birth of a Virgin and His Divinity, teaching that Divine power came upon Him at His baptism. They claimed that the Mosaic law, as it came from God, was binding upon all, except that there were no more bloody sacrifices. They had a special antipathy to St. Paul, whom they regarded as a traitor to his own people, and they accepted St. Matthew's Gospel only. St. James the Lord's brother was, to their mind, the leader of the Church.

They continued, chiefly in Palestine, till the fifth century, and the remnant of them was probably absorbed by the Mohammedans.

The Gnostics were so called from the Greek word *gnosis* (knowledge), because they professed to have fuller knowledge of the truth than others. Gnosticism has many points of contact with modern theosophy and Christian Science. Simon Magus (Acts 8 : 9) of whom it was said, "This man is the great power of God," was reckoned as the founder of this heresy. Another Gnostic leader was Cerinthus, of whom Eusebius tells us that when St. John saw him in a bath-house at Ephesus as he was about to enter, he ran out crying, "Let us flee, lest the bath fall because Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within."

The best known of the early teachers of Gnosticism was Marcion, who was the son of a bishop of Sinope on the Black Sea. He came to Rome about A.D. 140, proposing to reform the Church by eliminating all the elements which had been derived from Judaism. He rejected the Old Testament entirely, and his Bible consisted of a selection from St. Paul's Epistles and St. Luke's Gospel with some omissions. All matter, he taught, was evil, and the Creator, the God of the Jews, was an evil spirit who was at enmity with the supreme God. Christ, he said, did not take an earthly body, did not really suffer, and only seemed to die, and he redeemed from the bondage of the flesh those who believed in Him.

Montanism

We pray in the Litany to be delivered "from all false doctrine, heresy and schism." False doctrine may come from ignorance or misunderstanding. Heresy is a wilful departure from the faith as it is held by the Church, and schism is a separation from the communion of the Church, but does not necessarily imply unsound doctrine.

One of the earliest schisms from which the Church suffered was that of Montanus, which arose in Phrygia in the latter part of the second century and spread rapidly both to the east and west. The movement was emotional rather than intellectual. A modern writer says: "In the same sense as Gnosticism is Christianity perverted by learning and speculation, Montanism is Christianity

perverted by fear of learning and speculation. While the one refines the Gospel into philosophy, the other debases it into a coarse revivalism, equally opposed to the intellectual pride of the Gnostics and to the dignified traditionalism of the subapostolic Church."

Its founder, Montanus, was originally a heathen, and some say a priest of Cybele. When he was converted he took up his new religion with enthusiasm. But he did not find the life and activity in the Church which he looked for. There seemed to be too much officialism in the clergy and, after the cessation of persecution, a spirit of worldliness everywhere. It needed to be roused to fresh activity by the exercise of the spirit of prophecy. He taught that there was no reason to suppose that supernatural revelations had come to an end, but that under the dispensation of the Paraclete, whom Christ had promised to send, there would be revealed the whole counsel of God.

It is charged against Montanus that he represented himself as the Paraclete come in human form, but this charge is probably due to the fact that he persuaded himself that his utterances were not his own, but that the Holy Spirit spoke through him.

Very little is known of Montanus himself, but his work was carried on by two remarkable women, Prisca (or Priscilla) and Maximilla, who were both Phrygians. They were believed to have prophetic inspiration. Maximilla, who died about 179, proclaimed that she was the last of the prophets. "After me no prophet more, but the end." The New Jerusalem was to come down from heaven and be established at Pepuza, an obscure Phrygian village and the home of Prisca, and there Christ would reign a thousand years; and Pepuza became a centre for pilgrims from all quarters.

Montanism certainly had its good side as a protest on behalf of spiritual religion, and the Montanists were earnest people, of upright character, somewhat carried away by fanaticism, but some of them saints and martyrs. At first they were content to be a society within the Church, as the early Methodists in England and the Waldenses in Southern France, and the New Prophecy was regarded as supplementary to the regular work of the Church. Belief in the inspiration of Montanus did not necessitate

separation from the Church any more than did belief in the inspiration of Swedenborg in modern times, though likely to lead to it.

When the bishops of the Church declined to believe that the eccentric utterances of men and women who professed to have the gift of prophecy were the result of divine inspiration, or thought them due to the possession of evil spirits, it was said by the Montanists that the Church had become reprobate and did not really believe in the teaching of the Spirit. They said that they were spiritual and the adherents of the Church carnal. Disputes arose and synods were held in different parts of Asia which condemned the movement, and Montanism became a sect, outside the communion of the Church.

The Montanists maintained an austere discipline. They added new fasts to those already prescribed; they denied the lawfulness of second marriages, and refused absolution for deadly sins committed after baptism. Again, they taught the insufficiency of the Scriptures. Prophetic revelation might add to the teaching of Christ, they thought, or even contradict it; whereas the Catholic teaching was that the Bible was complete.

Tertullian

That Montanism was not unreasonable fanaticism appealing only to the lower classes, is proved by the fact that it attracted to its ranks one of the greatest theologians of the early Church, Tertullian, perhaps the most eminent man in the Church since the days of the Apostles. Bishop Kaye finds a modern parallel to his perversion in the fact that the great French Archbishop Fénelon was carried away by the mysticism of Madame Guyon. Tertullian was a native of Carthage and was highly educated in literature, history, philosophy and science, and well trained in Roman law. He was brought up a heathen and his conversion to Christianity took place about 192, and a few years later he was admitted to the priesthood. He is distinguished as the first great Latin theologian, as all the other Western writers of note wrote in Greek. Tertullian was, by his doctrinal writings, says Dr. Schaff, "the teacher of Cyprian, the predecessor of Augustine, and the chief founder of Latin theology."

His writings covered a wide field and were characterized by remarkable strength and vigour. His *Apology* addressed to the Roman magistrates is the best defence of Christianity and of the Christians ever written, and is one of the greatest monuments of the early Church. Speaking of the wonderful growth of the Church in spite of persecution, he says, "We are of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you—your cities, islands, villages, towns, assemblies, your very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum." He was a vigorous defender of the faith against heresy, writing treaties against Marcion, Valentinus, Praxeas and others.

Somewhere about the beginning of the third century he became a Montanist. Various attempts have been made to explain his defection; but in all probability the true explanation lies in the fact that his constitution and temperament welcomed the austerity of the Montanists before he joined the sect and accepted the New Prophecy. In his earlier writings he is comparatively mild in temper but as he grew older he is hard and unmerciful. "His latest works are monuments of Montanist narrowness and want of charity. Yet, even these are full of power; only Tertullian could have written them, and Tertullian only in the bitterness of his old age."

St. Irenæus

While Tertullian was writing at Carthage, another notable theologian of a very different type was earnestly contending for the faith in the West. This was Irenæus, who succeeded the martyred Pothinus as Bishop of Lyons in A.D. 177. Like his predecessor in office, he was a native of Asia Minor and was born about the year 130. In his younger days he had been a pupil of Polycarp, to whose teaching he refers in several places. "When I was a boy," he says, addressing Florinus, whom he accuses of false teaching, "I saw you in the company of Polycarp in Asia. . . . I remember better what happened then than I do what is more recent, for the teaching we receive in boyhood grows with our growth and knits itself to our soul; so that I can describe the place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit, his going out and his coming in, his manner of life and personal appearance, and the discourses he made to

the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate his words." Thus Irenæus was an important link in the chain of evidence for the authenticity of St. John's Gospel; for he received the fourth Gospel as genuine, and it is incredible that one who had been on intimate terms with Polycarp could have accepted a forgery attributed to St. John of which Polycarp knew nothing.

Though he had not the training in rhetoric of Tertullian, or in philosophy of Clement of Alexandria, who was a younger contemporary, Irenæus was a clear thinker and well versed in Greek literature, and also, in order to qualify himself for the chief pastorate of the Church at Lyons, he learned the Celtic dialect of the country, and laboured extensively for the evangelization of Southern Gaul.

He is, however, best known to us by his treatise *Against Heresies*, which consists of five books and is the only work of his that has come down to us entire. It was written about A.D. 185 and is one of the most valuable of early Christian writings. It consists for the most part of a criticism of Gnosticism in its various forms, but incidentally it throws a flood of light upon the faith and practice of the Church in the second century. The basis of teaching is the Bible as interpreted by the Church. It reminds us of modern controversies when we read of those who, "when they are confuted from the Scriptures, turn around and accuse these same Scriptures as if they were not correct, nor of authority."

It is remarkable that at this early date, long before the contents of the New Testament had been fixed by any synodical decree, Irenæus makes use of the same books we have to-day and regards them as authoritative and inspired. "We have learned from none others," he says, "the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim to the public, and at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures to be the ground and pillar of our faith." Of the fourfold Gospel he says, "Matthew issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching

at Rome and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord who also leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia." In another place he argues that there must be four Gospels and no more.

The Apostolic Faith and the Sacraments

The false teachers against whom Irenæus wrote, claimed that they had a secret tradition from certain of the Apostles, and Irenæus replied that the Church had a tradition from all the Apostles handed down through their successors. "It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the Apostles manifested throughout the world, and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the Apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and to show the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew anything like these men rave about." The summary of the faith which he asserts as everywhere believed is almost in the words of the Apostles' Creed, asserting clearly the incarnation, the virgin birth, the passion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ in the flesh.

Contending for the sacraments he says there are some, "instigated by Satan to a denial of baptism, which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole faith"; and he declared that our Lord, "giving to the disciples the power of regeneration unto God, said unto them, 'Go and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"

His words on the Eucharist perhaps suggested the first part of the words of administration in our Prayer Book. "For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of

the resurrection to eternity." "When, therefore," he says elsewhere, "the mingled cup and the bread receive the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the Body and Blood of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the Gift of God, which is life eternal, when it is nourished from the Body and Blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?"

Who was St. Hippolytus?

Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenæus and was certainly one of the greatest theologians of the age. Dr. Salmon, in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, calls him "unquestionably the most learned member of the Roman Church at the beginning of the third century." He was born in the second half of the second century and died about 240; but, beyond these facts we know but little as the evidence seems so contradictory. He was a bishop, but of what See? Not of Rome, for the list of bishops is complete without him. Some regard him as the first anti-pope, but then how did he come to be reckoned by the Roman Church among the saints? According to some, he was Bishop of Portus, at the mouth of the Tiber; but there is no mention anywhere of Portus as a bishopric. One ingenious theory is that he was coadjutor bishop under Victor, with special charge of the foreign population. He certainly disagreed with the two succeeding Bishops of Rome, Zephyrinus and Callistus, whom he accused of laxity of discipline, and of favouring the Sabellian heresy, which denied the three Persons in the Trinity.

A marble statue of Hippolytus was found in 1551, and on the chair in which he is sitting is a list of his writings. Most of these are comments on the Scriptures, nearly all of which are lost. A copy of the greatest part of his work entitled *The Refutation of all Heresies*, was found at Mt. Athos in 1842, and the so-called *Egyptian Church Order* containing much information as to the worship of the Church at that period is now attributed to him. He shows in this a wonderful acquaintance with pagan philosophy, Oriental theosophy and Chaldean astrology, from which the Gnostics of the day derived their

doctrines. One of the charges which he brought against these men was that of garbling the Scriptures and quoting piecemeal. "Whenever heretics wish to practise deceit," he says, "they mutilate the Scriptures. Let them quote the Scriptures as a whole."

Hippolytus was banished with Pontianus, Bishop of Rome, to work in the mines in the pestilential island of Sardinia, by the Emperor Severus in 235, and it is thought that they both died there.

CHAPTER IV

The School at Alexandria

ALEXANDRIA, situated at the Western mouth of the Nile, was the chief commercial city of the East, and was the most cosmopolitan city in the world, as it was the meeting-place of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe. It contained the largest colony of Jews outside of Jerusalem, and there the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, was made in the third century, B.C. It was also a centre of Greek learning and philosophy, and had a library supposed to have contained 700,000 volumes in all languages.

It was specially necessary that such a city should have trained Christian teachers, able to meet the scholars and thinkers of the day on their own ground, and to give a reason for the hope that was in them, and a remarkable succession of such men was found in the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Tradition assigns the foundation of this great school to the evangelist St. Mark, but the first teacher of whom we have any definite knowledge was Pantænus, about the year 180, and after him came Clement of Alexandria.

Pantænus was originally a Stoic philosopher, and he brought his philosophic training into use in teaching Christianity to those who were seeking for wisdom. He visited India as a missionary, apparently leaving Clement in charge of the school during his absence.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement, who was a Greek by birth, had passed through an experience similar to that of Justin Martyr, in going from one school of philosophy to another in his search for truth, until he found a satisfactory teacher in Pantænus, whose assistant he became about A.D. 190, and whom he succeeded in the year 202.

Unlike most of his contemporaries, whose dread of Gnosticism made them suspicious of the wisdom of this world, he regarded Greek learning and philosophy not as antagonistic to the religion of Christ, but as a preparation for it. If it did not come direct from heaven, as the law by the dispensation of angels, at least it came indirectly, for it was the product of the reason which was implanted in man by God, " God," he says, " is the cause of all good things ; but of some primarily, as of the Old and New Testament, and of others by consequence, as philosophy. Perchance too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a school-master to bring the Hellenic mind, as the Law the Hebrews, to Christ. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ."

But Clement differed from the Gnostic heretics and from modern freethinkers in that he held firmly to the historic revelation, and did not overlay it with speculations, so there is very little of his teaching which had to be corrected as thought advanced.

The three great works of his which have come down to us are the *Address to the Greeks*, the *Tutor* and the *Miscellanies*. The first is addressed to those outside the Church ; the second consists mostly of moral instruction for converts, and the third is intended to portray the character of the true gnostic, satisfying the desires of the intellect, but preserving him from " knowledge falsely so called." We have also part of another work called *Outlines*, which consists of interpretations of Scripture.

Clement was evidently a multifarious reader, and many of his quotations are from books now lost, which were probably contained in the great Alexandrian Library.

Origen

The greatest of the teachers of the Catechetical School was Origen. No Eastern theologian, except Athanasius, more than a century later, was so widely known, or had such an influence upon Christian thought.

Origen was a native of Alexandria, born of Christian parents in 185. His father, Leonides, who was a teacher

of rhetoric, suffered martyrdom in 202, and Origen was left, at the age of seventeen, to support his mother and six younger brothers. He had received a liberal education and had studied at the Catechetical School under both Pantænus and Clement. He opened a private school, and displayed conspicuous talents as a teacher.

A severe persecution about 203 forced Clement to retire from Alexandria and take refuge in Cappadocia, with a former pupil, Alexander, afterwards Bishop of Jerusalem, and he never returned. The Bishop of Alexandria, Demetrius, recognizing the abilities of Origen, appointed him head of the school. Not only Christians, but Jews, gnostics and heathen, were attracted by his lectures, and many of them were brought by him to the faith of the Gospel. Six of his scholars perished in the persecution but he himself was unmolested. He practised severe asceticism, until his health was impaired, and would accept no fees for his teaching, making and selling copies of old authors to support himself and those dependent upon him. He visited Rome in A.D. 212, and while there made the acquaintance of Hippolytus, and in 215 he visited Palestine, where the Bishops of Cæsarea and Jerusalem thought so highly of his teaching, that, though he was not ordained, they invited him to expound the Scriptures in the Church. Evidently such a thing was considered a grave irregularity at Alexandria and the Bishop, Demetrius, was much displeased. He thought it a much greater irregularity, however, when these Bishops a few years later, without consulting him, ordained Origen to the priesthood. Demetrius refused to recognize his ordination, with the result that Origen removed to Cæsarea and made his home there, surrounded by his pupils. Twice he was summoned from here to attend synods against heretics in Arabia, and on both occasions he succeeded in convincing them of their errors. In the Decian persecution (A.D. 250) he suffered imprisonment and torture at Tyre, and died in 254.

Heraclas, who succeeded Origen as head of the Catechetical School, became Bishop of Alexandria, on the death of Demetrius, in 231, and Dionysius, a pupil of Origen's, was appointed in his place.

Origen's Books and Teaching

Origen was a voluminous writer, though comparatively few of his writings have come down to us. His literary work began in 218, when a rich friend, Ambrosius, provided him with stenographers, copyists, and books, and urged him to write. There was a tradition that his works numbered six thousand. They included treatises on textual criticism of the Scriptures, commentaries, sermons and apologetic and dogmatic works. His masterpiece was the *Hexapla*, or Sixfold Old Testament, giving the Hebrew text, the same in Greek characters, the Septuagint, and three other Greek versions, of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. This work, which was the result of more than twenty years' labour, unfortunately has not come down to us. His best known book is his reply to Celsus, a philosopher who had written a book entitled *True Doctrine*, against Christianity.

Origen's treatment of the Scriptures is based upon a peculiar theory of a threefold meaning : literal, moral and spiritual ; "for as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so does Scripture." His book on *First Principles*, contains much that is sound and good, but indulges in a good deal of speculation, one of his theories being that the devil and his angels, purified, by punishment, will cease to be enemies of God. Much controversy arose as to his orthodoxy. Rome joined with Alexandria in condemning him, but he was warmly defended in Cappadocia, Palestine and Greece.

St. Cyprian and his Times

The Church in North Africa was so utterly overwhelmed and crushed by the Mohammedan uprising in the seventh century that it is difficult to realize its prominence in the early centuries of Christianity. The names of Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine are among the greatest in the undivided Church, and Carthage, which for twelve centuries has been not much more than name, was at one time the centre of Latin Christianity. In the third century there were 140 bishops in Roman Africa. This church had its martyrs as well, as Perpetua, commemorated in our calendar on March 7th, a young matron of education and good standing, who suffered in the amphitheatre at

Carthage in 202, and her companion, the slave girl Felicitas, and afterwards the martyr bishop, St. Cyprian.

Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus, to give him his full name, was a man of wealth, and good standing, and had been trained as an orator and teacher of rhetoric before he became a Christian. He was converted about the year 246 by an aged presbyter named Cæcilius. He was dignified and attractive in appearance, and was held in such esteem that he never lost the friendship of his heathen neighbours, some of whom were of high rank. After his conversion he sold a considerable portion of his estates for the benefit of the poor, including some gardens which were bought by friends and restored to him.

He seems to have been ordained almost immediately after his baptism, and when the bishopric of Carthage became vacant in 248, Cyprian, on account of his exceptional position and recognized powers, was elected bishop. He declined the honour at first, but although there was a small minority strongly opposed to him, the people were determined to have him and urged the office upon him until he believed it was a call from God, and at last consented. A strong man was particularly needed at Carthage at that time, and such a man was found in Cyprian. If he was not a great theologian, like Irenæus, Tertullian or Origen, he was a wise administrator, with firmness and good judgment. There had been thirty years of cessation from persecution, and in that time both clergy and people had grown careless, and when the persecution was renewed under Decius in 250, they were not strong enough to stand up against it. Cyprian left Carthage, not for his own safety, but to defeat the purpose of the persecutors whose policy it was to cripple the Church by destroying its leaders, and he continued to administer the affairs of his diocese from his place of refuge. Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory of Neocæsarea, and several other bishops pursued the same course in this persecution and saved their lives by flight.

Many Christians fell away under persecution and offered incense or sacrifice to the heathen gods, and many others paid sums of money to the magistrates to obtain false certificates of having offered sacrifice. Both those who had sacrificed and those who had obtained certificates without sacrificing were regarded by the Church as "lapsed" and

renegade, and were cut off from communion. Then arose another scandal. Some of the lapsed had friends who had endured imprisonment or torture for confessing the name of Christ, and these confessors were naturally held in high esteem. Letters to the bishops were obtained from these men, asking that, for their sakes, their friends who had lapsed be again admitted to communion. There were even some "confessors" who made this a matter of gain, and had a regular form, demanding that the bishop to whom it was presented should receive the bearer back to communion.

Cyprian took a firm stand in this matter, and the Church of Rome agreed with him that those who had lapsed must submit to their punishment, and only be granted immediate absolution if they were dying.

The Novatianist Schism

There were two parties opposed to Cyprian's decision, one refusing altogether to re-admit the lapsed, and the other granting them re-admission without any restriction at all. The leader of the latter party at Carthage was Novatus, a presbyter, who was apparently one of the original opponents of Cyprian's election. He had some powerful supporters, but the synods summoned by Cyprian in A.D. 251 and 252 ratified the bishop's decision.

In the meantime trouble had arisen at Rome over the same question. Fabian, Bishop of Rome, was martyred in 250, and the See remained vacant for eighteen months, when Cornelius was elected. The question of the discipline of the lapsed came before him and he followed a more lenient course than Cyprian, which at once aroused the opposition of a party of rigorists, of whom the leader was Novatian, a presbyter of undoubted learning and eloquence, but of a severe and gloomy temper. Strangely enough, Novatus, the leader of the disaffected party at Carthage, who thought Cyprian too strict, came over to Rome and joined Novatian in his opposition to Cornelius. The validity of the consecration of Cornelius was questioned on the ground of an irregularity in his baptism, and Novatian was set up as Bishop of Rome and consecrated by three Italian bishops. The sect spread to other countries and had adherents in the East up to the end of the sixth century.

Latterly it taught that the Church cannot forgive mortal sin, and those who came over from Catholicism were re-baptized.

Work and Martyrdom of St. Cyprian

The circumstances of the time called forth from the pen of Cyprian a number of letters and treatises, dealing chiefly with moral and practical matters, such as almsgiving, the care of the sick and dying, patience, all written in strong and polished Latin. His best-known treatise is probably *On the Unity of the Church*, in which he speaks strongly of the episcopate as the bond of unity. The bishops, he says, hold this in common, and each has a claim upon the whole. On one point, that of the validity of schismatical or heretical baptism, Cyprian's ruling has not been endorsed by the Church. While maintaining that "no one can have God for his father who has not the Church for his mother," he thought it followed of necessity that those baptized outside the Church were not baptized at all. In this he stood out against Stephen, Bishop of Rome, who said that all baptisms were valid if administered in the proper manner.

The plague broke out in Carthage in the year 252, and Cyprian laboured with such energy and devotion amongst his people as to win the hearts of all.

In 257 an edict against Christians was issued by Valerian, and Cyprian was banished to Curubis, a lonely place on the Mediterranean, where he spent eleven months, treated with great consideration. He returned to Carthage, and soon after an imperial rescript was issued for severer measures against Christian rulers, and the proconsul sentenced him to execution by the sword. He died on September 14th, 260.

In the matter of Church organization and government, there is no one who has exerted as powerful an influence upon the Western Church as St. Cyprian.

How the New Testament Grew

The fact has already been noted that in the middle of the second century, when Justin Martyr wrote, the Gospels were read in the Church, and that, a little later, Irenæus referred to the four Gospels as the authoritative account

of the life and teaching of Christ; but it was a century later before the whole collection of books, which we call the New Testament—a term first used by Tertullian, about A.D. 190—was definitely recognized in all parts of the Church.

This is not difficult to explain. The epistles were letters written as occasion called them forth, and they had first of all a particular and local interest. Thus, the letter to the Galatians was occasioned by the mischievous teaching of prejudiced and narrow-minded Jewish Christians who said it was necessary to observe the law of Moses; the Thessalonians were disturbed by the belief that the second advent of the Lord was at hand, and needed the counsel of St. Paul; the letter to Philemon was a personal one, concerning the return of his runaway slave Onesimus; those to Timothy and Titus were directions to men who had been placed by the Apostle in episcopal charge of Ephesus and Crete respectively, giving them directions concerning matters of Church government. And so we might go through all the epistles.

The high esteem in which the great Apostle was held gave his letters a value above ordinary writings, and he himself gave direction concerning some of them that they should be publicly read, and (as Dr. Sanday suggests) "it was not long before the Apostolic letters began to be treasured in the archives of the Church, in the same chest or cupboard we may suppose with the copies of the Old Testament, and they would be brought out and read on special occasions, at first somewhat irregularly, but after a time in a certain order and system." Thus collections of Apostolic writings would be made for every Church by obtaining copies of those that were easy of access, but it would be some time before those collections would be complete. Books which were known in one part would not be so well known in another, and it would not be strange if smaller epistles, like the Second and Third Epistles of St. John, did not obtain as large a circulation as others which seemed to be of greater importance. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which did not bear the name of its author, was regarded with doubt in the West for some time, although it was accepted in the East, and on the other hand the Apocalypse, i.e. the Revelation of St. John, was

accepted as "canonical" in the Western Church before it was in the East.

The New Testament in the Second Century

A very interesting list of received books, commonly known as the Muratorian Fragment, was found in the Ambrosian library at Milan in 1740 by an Italian scholar named Muratori. It is an old manuscript, probably written in the eighth century, and part of it is gone; but it is evidently copied from a much earlier document, which scholars say was written about A.D. 170 or 180, and of which the writer is unknown. From this it appears that the Church then recognized the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, two Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude and the Apocalypse. There is no mention of St. James or Hebrews, which were certainly known and received at Rome at that time, but these may have been mentioned in the portion of the document which is missing.

It is an evidence that the Canon of Scripture had not yet been definitely fixed when the original document was written, that one book is mentioned, the "Apocalypse of Peter," of which the writer says, "Some of our body will not have it read in the Church."

It is noteworthy that the recognition of the books of the Canon of the New Testament was not in obedience to the authority of any council, still less of any individual bishop, but it was due to the general sense of the Church, taught (we are bound to believe) by the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's own promise "He will guide you into all truth."

The final settlement of the Canon came at the time of the Diocletian persecution, early in the third century, when a systematic attempt was made to destroy the Christian Scriptures, and the question arose what books might be delivered up to the inquisitors without seeming to deny the faith. There were a number of books which were held in high esteem by Christians, and read for instruction and edification, such as the Epistle of Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas and others, but these were not quoted as authoritative in the same way as the other books and were not treasured up with the same jealous care.

The Apostles' Creed

In one sense, of course, the Creed is older than the New Testament. The Christians of Apostolic days and the age immediately following had a definite belief although they had no Scriptures which were peculiarly their own; and as this belief is taken for granted by the writers of the New Testament books, so it is the key to their meaning. We interpret the Scriptures in the light of the Creed.

It is true that the New Testament, as we have inherited it from the Early Church, is older than the Creed in its present form; but there was a "form of sound words" long before the Creed was fully developed. "If Scripture is a storehouse of doctrine," says Professor Gwatkin, "it is a very bad manual. The need of short summaries was felt long before the Canon was formed," and he goes on to explain how the candidates for baptism had to be instructed before they could profess their belief, and this instruction was most conveniently based upon some form which was short enough to be remembered. Naturally, these forms varied somewhat in different places, though they were very similar, for they were based upon the main facts of our Lord's life as they were handed down from the first teachers of the Church. What we call the Apostles' Creed is rightly so called, because it represents the faith held and taught by the Apostles. It is substantially the old Roman Creed, and Professor Harnack, the great German scholar, says, "We may regard it as an assured result of research that the old Roman Creed came into existence about or shortly before the middle of the second century." Words and even whole clauses were added at different times and in different places to safeguard truths which seemed to be in danger, and these were gradually adopted until the whole Church at length accepted the full Creed as we have it to-day.

CHAPTER V

The Long Peace

THE Church had rest from persecution during the latter part of the third century, but it was not an unmixed blessing. Soon after the death of St. Cyprian the reign of Valerian came to an end and his son Gallienus, who succeeded to the imperial throne, at once issued an edict putting an end to persecution and recognizing Christianity as a lawful religion. This was in the year 260, and from that time until the Diocletian persecution suddenly broke out in A.D. 303 Christians were unmolested.

But it is remarkable that in all those years of peace the Church produced no markedly strong characters. It was an age of progress for the Church, as we commonly reckon progress. Quietly and unostentatiously the heralds of the Gospel carried their message to the farthest corners of the empire. Britain, then a flourishing Roman colony, had its bishops, and so had Spain and Germany. There were churches in the East, in Armenia and Persia, and perhaps India. North Africa, from Egypt to the Atlantic, seems to have been fully evangelized, and even in Arabia there were bishops enough to hold councils.

Then it was an age of church building. Eusebius, who was born about the time of the edict of Gallienus, says that the Christians of those days, not satisfied with the ancient buildings, erected from the foundation large churches in all the cities. The cathedral in the royal city of Nicomedia stood on an eminence not far from the imperial palace and was, presumably, not unworthy of comparison with the other public buildings of the city whose ambition was to rival Rome itself. We read, too, of the "multitudes that crowded together in every city, and famous gatherings in the houses of prayer." Christianity had attained a measure of popularity, and that is always dangerous. "Woe

unto you when all men shall speak well of you," was the warning our Blessed Lord gave to His disciples, and we are still taught to pray, "In all time of our wealth, Good Lord deliver us." Eusebius says, "We fell into laxity and sloth, and envied and reviled each other, and were almost, as it were taking up arms against one another."

In the schools Christians and pagans studied side by side under teachers of rhetoric and philosophy, and there were Christian schools of repute at Antioch and Alexandria and elsewhere.

Porphyry

It was at this period that the Church had to encounter the opposition of one of the cleverest and most determined antagonists of any age, the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry. He was well-equipped for his work, for he had made a careful study of the Scriptures for the express purpose of disproving the infallibility which Christians assigned to them. He was a man, too, of irreproachable life, accepting the Christian standard of morals, though he rejected the faith, and set forth in its place what he considered a scientific philosophy of religion, which has very much in common with the rationalism of modern days. His attack upon Christianity consisted of fifteen books, which we only know from the quotations and arguments given by those who undertook to answer them.

He sought carefully for contradictions and discrepancies, and accused the writers of the Gospels of falsification. He magnified the disagreement between St. Peter and St. Paul, making out that there were two strongly antagonistic parties in the Church, and he discredited the Book of Daniel as not prophetical at all, but written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

At the same time he professed great respect and reverence for the person and teachings of Christ. There can be no doubt that these writings must have unsettled the faith of some, and they called forth able defences of the Christian position from such men as Eusebius the Church historian, Methodius of Tyre and Apollinaris of Laodicea.

Paul of Samosata

Another man of unenviable reputation, who may be said to be a product of this age, was Paul of Samosata, who was patriarch of Antioch from A.D. 260 to 269. Samosata, his birthplace, was the royal city of Syria. Paul was evidently a man of good education and of considerable ability, as he enjoyed the patronage of the celebrated Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, who maintained an independent sovereignty against the Roman power while Gallienus was emperor. She was well versed in Greek and Latin literature, and took pleasure in philosophical discussions with Longinus, the Neoplatonist, and theological discussions with Paul, whom she appointed to a high civil office, of which he was prouder than of his office as bishop. He was an early example of a worldly bishop. He amassed a great fortune and surrounded himself with all the pomp and state to which he thought himself entitled, assuming a lofty dignity very unbecoming in a minister of Jesus Christ.

Zenobia herself was attached to the Jewish religion, and Paul is supposed to have corrupted the faith of the Gospel from a desire to make his teaching acceptable to his patroness and to the philosophers with whom he came in contact at court.

He taught that Christ was a mere man and had no existence previous to his birth, but that the Divine Word came upon Him as an impersonal power and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him at His baptism, and He became divine as a reward for his obedience. A great deal of his teaching is reproduced for us at the present day in the so-called New Theology.

When his fellow-bishops were informed of his errors they met together and unanimously condemned such teaching as a perversion of the faith. He endeavoured at first to clear himself but when it was found that he persisted in his heresy he was excommunicated at a Synod held at Antioch in 268, and another bishop was appointed in his place. By the favour of Zenobia, however, he retained the temporalities of the See until the downfall of Palmyra in A.D. 272.

The Persecution under Diocletian

The long peace of more than forty years came to an end by the sudden and unexpected outbreak of persecution under Diocletian in A.D. 303. It was unexpected, for Diocletian had ruled for eighteen years, and had proved himself one of the best rulers that had ever sat on the imperial throne. It is true he was attached to the old religion, but he was not narrow-minded, and there were Christians in his own household, and even his wife and daughter were said to be favourably disposed to Christianity. Then his private life was without stain, and his rule generally was wise and clement. It is true he assumed autocratic powers instead of consulting the will of the senate, but it has been said that an absolute monarchy is the best form of government if only you can get the right man for the autocrat, and it is quite credible that Diocletian thought it would be better to deal with great matters himself than to leave them to the senate. In order to relieve himself of some of the weight of government, in 286 he appointed his former comrade, Maximian, to be Augustus of the West, and a few years later he made Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, Cæsars in the East and West respectively. Rome ceased to be the capital, and there were imperial residences at Treves and Milan and Sirmium and Nicomedia. These four rulers seem to have worked harmoniously, though they were men of very different character. The story that Maximian used his power against the Christians by the massacre of the whole Theban Legion, for refusing to act against Christians, must be rejected as unhistorical.

Galerius was a man of coarse and brutal disposition, and was very superstitious, and as he was son-in-law to Diocletian, it is natural to suppose that he had influence with him. Diocletian spent the winter of 302–3 with Galerius at the palace at Nicomedia, and it was there that he became persuaded that, in the interests of the state religion, some restrictions must be placed upon Christianity, which was attracting converts rapidly, to the loss of the temples of the gods. First, in the imperial household all were ordered to sacrifice on pain of scourging, and commanders were directed to dismiss from the service of the

army all who refused sacrifice to the Roman gods. Then in the year 303, and the following year, three edicts appeared, one after another, practically handing Christians over to the violence of the mob.

The Legend of St. George

On February 23rd a troop of soldiers was marched to the great church of Nicomedia at sunrise, and the doors were broken open and search made for the Christians' god. When none was found, the sacred books were burnt, the furniture destroyed or carried off, and the building levelled to the ground, while Diocletian and Galerius looked on from the palace near at hand. The next day the first edict was posted, which ordered (1) that all churches should be demolished; (2) that the Holy Scriptures should be seized and burnt; (3) that Christians should be deprived of all honours and dignities; and (4) that Christian slaves, as long as they remained Christians, should not be capable of manumission.

This edict was hardly posted, when it was violently torn down. "A certain man," says Eusebius, who was about forty years of age at the time, "not obscure but highly honoured with distinguished temporal dignities, moved with zeal towards God, and incited with ardent faith, seized the edict, as it was posted openly and publicly, and tore it to pieces as a profane and impious thing." Eusebius does not mention the name of this man, nor does his contemporary Lactantius, but tradition identifies him with St. George, the patron saint of England, whose fame began in the time of the Crusades, and under whose patronage the order of the Garter was instituted in the reign of Edward III.

The historical foundation for this identification is very slight, but it is generally thought that at least there was an officer of high rank in the army who suffered martyrdom in the Diocletian persecution. The man who destroyed the edict was promptly seized and tortured and finally burnt.

Progress of the Persecution

When Diocletian first consented to a persecution of Christians it was with the proviso that there be no bloodshed, but this restriction did not last long. The second

edict ordered that all bishops and priests should be imprisoned, and the third, ordered that imprisoned clergy be set free, if they would consent to sacrifice to the gods; otherwise they would be subject to torture. The persecution became general, but was more severe in some parts than in others. Men, women and children suffered, being put to death in many cases with terrible cruelty. It was worse in the East than in the West, chiefly because Constantius was more humane than Galerius, and after two years, both Diocletian and Maximian abdicated and retired to private life. Galerius carried on the persecutions vigorously, but Gaul and Spain and Britain were comparatively free, under the rule of Constantius Chlorus, and of his son Constantine, who became Cæsar in the year 306 on the death of his father.

For eight years the church suffered under this terrible scourge, until even Galerius was convinced that it was impossible to exterminate Christianity, and in the year 311, in conjunction with Constantine and Licinius, he issued an Edict of Toleration, which admitted that the persecution had done nothing to bring men back to the old religion of the land, and gave Christians permission to meet for worship, and hoped that they would pray to their God for the emperors and the state.

The First British Martyr

One martyrdom generally reckoned as having taken place under this persecution is that of St. Alban of Britain, the full story of which is given by the Venerable Bede. When the order was given that the clergy should be imprisoned, a Christian priest in Britain fled for shelter to the cottage of Alban, a pagan Briton. Alban observed the priest's prayers day and night, listened to his instructions and embraced the faith. When at length soldiers came to arrest the cleric, Alban helped him to escape, and himself put on the priest's cassock and gave himself into their hands. When brought before the magistrate and charged with sheltering a blasphemer of the gods, he avowed himself a Christian, and, in spite of torture, refused to sacrifice to the heathen gods. He was then sentenced to death, and led outside the city of Verulamium, where his trial took place, and beheaded on June 22nd, 303. The date June 17th

in the Prayer Book Calendar is an error. A number of legends have grown up about the story, but there is no doubt as to its substantial truth. It should be said, however, that the year in which St. Alban suffered is not certain, and some authorities think it was earlier, during the Decian persecution.

The Donatist Schism

The history of the Church is a record of constant struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. It is a mistake to suppose that there was a golden age when all was peace, and brotherly love prevailed, and the saints were unspotted by the world. It is only when we look back at the trials through which the Church has had to pass and see how wonderfully she has survived and made progress that we realize that God is in the midst of her, guiding and keeping her that His good purposes towards men may not fail.

The bitter persecution in the first decade of the fourth century tried the faith of those who professed and called themselves Christians. Some fell away, many were added to "the noble army of martyrs," and others courted martyrdom, or at least imprisonment, to gain the applause of their fellow Christians; and the fanaticism of the latter class became a grave scandal in the Church.

When a demand was made by the inquisitors for the Holy Scriptures, some gave them up and were branded by the opprobrious name of "Traditors," and there was a strong feeling that it was reprehensible even to seem to comply with the demand by handing over uncanonical or heretical books; and when Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, saved his life in this way many considered him a traditor. Mensurius, with his archdeacon Cæcilian, did his best to put some check upon the popular enthusiasm for martyrdom, and consequently made many enemies. On the death of Mensurius in A.D. 311, Cæcilian was somewhat hastily elected to succeed him, and was consecrated by Felix, Bishop of Aptunga, without consulting the other bishops of the province. Objections were raised that the consecration was null and void because Felix was a traditor —as if the validity of the act depended upon the personal character of the minister—and a rival bishop, Majorinus,

was chosen and consecrated by the oponents of Cæcilian. Thus a schism was made in the Church, and from Carthage it spread throughout the province.

The Appeal to Constantine

As the Edict of Toleration had constituted Christianity a lawful religion and Constantine had shown that he was favourably disposed towards Christianity, an appeal was made to the Emperor to settle the matter. In answer to this appeal, an investigation was held at Rome, at which Cæcilian was present and the charges against him were dismissed. Felix also was acquitted of the accusation that he was a traditor.

The enemies of Cæcilian were not satisfied, and asked for a further investigation to be held at Carthage. The Emperor granted this, and jurists were sent there to take evidence and tabulate statements in due legal form, but the charges made against Felix could not be sustained.

The Council of Arles

A further attempt was made by Constantine to allay the discontent by assembling a council of bishops at Arles, in southern Gaul, A.D. 314. About two hundred bishops were present, brought at public expense, from Italy, Sicily, Africa, Gaul and even Britain. It was the largest synod that had ever assembled, and among the bishops present were three from the ancient British Church—Eborius of York, Restitutus of London and Adelphius of Lincoln (though the identity of the latter place is uncertain), with an attendant priest and deacon. The decision of the council was entirely in favour of Cæcilian.

There were other matters of great importance to the Church also dealt with by this Council. With regard to the observance of Easter it was ordered that all churches should keep the festival at the same time and that the Bishop of Rome should make the day known. Another canon forbade the rebaptizing of heretics if they had been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. Those who had put away their wives for adultery were forbidden to marry again while their wives were living; and the general rule was laid down that, in the consecration of bishops, at least three bishops should take part.

Donatus

Whether Majorinus was living at the time of the Council of Arles is somewhat uncertain. He died either in A.D. 313 or 315, and was succeeded by Donatus, called "The Great," who became the leader of the party and gave it his name. Refusing to accept the decision of the Council, they appealed to Constantine himself, and although he was annoyed at their obstinacy, after some delay, he heard the question at Milan, and his decision accorded with the previous decisions, and he took from them their churches and refused to recognize that they had any legal status.

Donatus, however, was a man of unquestionable ability, and he did not hesitate to denounce the imperial power. His undaunted courage and determination communicated itself to his followers. When soldiers were sent to enforce the decisions of the Emperor, Donatus had sturdy followers ready to withstand them and ambitious to become martyrs in a good cause.

It soon became evident to Constantine that Donatism could not be put down by force. He wrote to the followers of Cæcilian urging them to be patient and gentle towards the schismatics and to try to win them over by kindness, and during the rest of his life he had nothing more to do with them. When Constans succeeded Constantine he tried severe measures again, but they only stirred up a fresh enthusiasm for martyrdom, and a band of fanatics of the lower class, who were called *Circumcellions*, because they went about the cells or cottages of the country people demanding food, terrorized the country. They attacked and plundered the churches and houses of the Catholic clergy, and neither persons nor property were safe from them. Sometimes they stopped travellers, threatening them with death, in the hope that they themselves would be killed, and many committed suicide. The more moderate Donatists strongly disapproved of such conduct.

Donatus himself would yield neither to law nor to bribes. "What has the Emperor to do with the Church?" he said, and he denounced bishops who were mere tools of the Emperor. Donatus was banished and died in exile, but the sect which bore his name continued in North Africa until it was swept away by Mohammedanism. It included

in its ranks some men of ability and literary merit. As things went from bad to worse with the Donatists many of their priests and laymen came back to the Church, where they were kindly received. St. Augustine, who himself lived in North Africa, and was brought in close contact with the Donatists, wrote several treatises against their errors and in defence of the Church.

CHAPTER VI

Arius

WHILE the Church in the West was troubled by the Donatist schism, a difficulty of a still more serious nature, as it affected the foundations of the Christian faith, was rising in the East. Arius, a Libyan, a man of middle age, of good education and distinguished appearance, was appointed to the charge of one of the churches in Alexandria in A.D. 313. He became very popular, and on the death of the patriarch, not long after, he came near being elected to the vacant throne, over his rival Alexander. In 318 he attacked Alexander at a clerical meeting for asserting that the Son of God was eternal, arguing in a plausible way that if the Father begat the Son, He must have existed before the Son.

The controversy thus begun went on for three years, when Alexander called a meeting of Egyptian and Libyan bishops, who excommunicated Arius and those who held with him for corrupting the doctrine which had been handed down from Apostolic days. Arius then left Alexandria for a time and went to Palestine, where he secured the support of Eusebius the influential bishop of Nicomedia, who was more of a politician than a theologian, and who (like many of the present day) thought that the Church should be broad enough to allow men to interpret the faith according to their own ideas. Arius himself seems to have been clever and ambitious, but subject to the temptation of popular preachers to say startling things. He was probably carried away by the admiration of followers who applauded the " modernism " of his teaching as contrasted with the conservatism of Alexander and the other bishops.

The Council of Nicæa

Constantine, who was truly anxious for the peace of the Church, did not at first perceive the gravity of the

controversy, and urged the combatants to make mutual concessions and come to some agreement; but Alexander felt that the responsibilities of his office laid upon him the obligation "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"; and in the year 325 the Emperor, influenced by his confidential adviser Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, invited the bishops of the Church to a council at Nicæa, a town in Bithynia, near the southern shore of the Black Sea and not far from Constantinople. They came from all parts of the Empire, and even beyond, to the number of 318. They met in a room in the royal palace, where Constantine himself gave them a formal welcome, and then left them in charge of their president, who was probably Hosius, as his name stands first in the list of bishops who signed the decrees of the Council.

The chief result of their deliberations was the formal repudiation of Arianism and the adoption of a creed which distinctly affirmed the truth which Arius denied. They did not debate concerning what Holy Scripture might mean, or what they thought most reasonable; but each bore witness to the doctrine which he had received. They recognized that they must hand down unimpaired the faith which the Church had received, and for this what was required was not so much learning or dialectical skill as honesty.

Of One Substance with the Father

The leading spirit of the Council was not the patriarch of Alexandria, as might have been expected, but his private secretary, Athanasius, who was then a deacon somewhat under thirty years of age, and who seems to have been entrusted to speak for the aged Alexander. He was of diminutive stature, but with a face which Gregory of Nazianzen compares to an angel's, and he spoke not for the justification of Alexander, but as one who felt, as he said, that "our contention is for our all." He knew what the faith was which had come from the Apostles, and he also understood the vital necessity of holding it fast.

A creed was brought forward for adoption, slightly different from our present "Nicene" creed, and ending with the phrase, "and in the Holy Ghost." The controversy centred around the term *homoousion* (of one substance or

essence). The objection was made that it was not a scriptural term. Why was it not enough to say, as the first Christians said, "Jesus Christ is God"? The answer is that the Arians had perverted the scriptural teaching and taught that the term "God" might be applied to a creature. Some of the Arians at the Council wished to make a compromise and substitute the term *homoiousion* (of like essence) for the orthodox term. There was only a difference of one letter, and it seemed to some that it was scandalous for the Church to be rent asunder for such a trifle. But, as Canon Liddon wrote, "The difference between Homoousion and Homoiousion convulsed the world for the simple reason that in that difference lay the whole question of the real truth or falsehood of our Lord's actual Divinity," and Athanasius saw clearly how necessary it was to define this in such a way as to leave no room for misunderstanding. The Son could not be a true Son and be of a different nature from the Father. He was "the effulgence of His Glory," a glory which shone forth from all eternity as the brightness from the sun.

All the bishops present subscribed the creed, with the exception of two, and even Eusebius of Nicomedia put his name to it, although he continued afterwards to hold communion with Arius. Arius was banished by order of the Emperor to Illyria, and the creed of Nicæa was generally accepted in the West, though many in the East were reluctant to adopt it, not only because there were some who sympathized with Arius, but because there was a prejudice against the adoption of a term not found in Holy Scripture.

There is a statement by the late Dr. Schaff concerning Arianism which puts the matter clearly and concisely: "The Arian system," he says, "was a refined form of paganism, and substituted a created demigod for the eternal Logos (the 'Word' of St. John's Gospel); it degraded Christianity to a mere relative value; it separated God and the world by an impassable gulf, and made a real reconciliation and atonement impossible; it represented the Erastian principle and associated itself with the secular political power, without which it soon lost its vitality; its irresistible tendency is downward to Socinianism, Unitarianism and Rationalism, until the untenable con-

ception of a secondary God, who originated before the world out of nothing, gives way to the idea of Christ as a mere man. The cause of Christian civilization was bound up with the downfall of Arianism, and the triumph of the Nicene doctrine of the Holy Trinity."

St. Athanasius

Athanasius, who championed the cause of Gospel truth not only at the Nicene Council, but for many years afterwards, was in many respects one of the most remarkable characters in the Church's history. A man of great intellectual power, he realized the prime importance of holding fast the faith which the Apostles had handed down, and he added "to his faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

It was only a short time after the Council that Alexander died, and in accordance with his expressed desire, Athanasius, who was only just thirty years of age, was chosen as his successor. His appointment was enthusiastically welcomed by the people of Alexandria, but it met with bitter opposition from the Arian party, and the forty-six years which followed were years of unceasing conflict.

The Arian leaders were shrewd politicians and they brought every possible influence to bear against him. Eusebius of Nicomedia was in favour at court, and he succeeded in persuading the Emperor's sister Constantia that Arius had been misrepresented and his teaching perverted, and she in turn impressed her brother with the same idea. As a result Arius was recalled from exile, and Athanasius was sent, perhaps to get him out of danger, to Treves, where the Emperor's son (afterwards Constantine II), was living. It was arranged that Arius was to be publicly admitted to communion in the Church of the Apostles at Constantinople, but he died suddenly on the previous day. Constantine died the following year, and his son, Constantine II, who had shown kindness to Athanasius, promptly restored him to his See, where he was received with great popular rejoicing.

Alone Against the World

In the division of the Empire among the sons of Constantine, the East was assigned to Constantius, with whom Eusebius of Nicomedia gained such favour that he was made Patriarch of Constantinople. Through his influence a rival bishop, Gregory, was appointed to Alexandria and enthroned by force of arms, and in the year 340 Athanasius was obliged to leave again. He went to Rome, where a council of fifty bishops pronounced him innocent. He then went to Gaul and was not allowed to return to Alexandria until the death of the intruding bishop in 350. For more than nine years he enjoyed comparative rest from persecution, but the intrigues of his enemies at last culminated in an attempt to seize him by an armed force which burst into the church during an evening service, and a great massacre ensued. Athanasius escaped and found refuge for some six years amongst the monks of the Egyptian deserts, while he kept in touch with his people and encouraged them by his writings. In the meantime on the Emperor's nomination, George of Cappadocia, an infamous character and a zealous Arian, was appointed in his place. This man is not be to confounded (as is sometimes done), with St. George, the patron saint of England, for before this, in Constantine's reign, there was a number of churches dedicated to St. George.

Arianism was now triumphant everywhere. The few bishops who were strong enough to uphold the Nicene faith were banished. Hosius, now nearly a hundred years old, who had for so many years contended for the truth, was forced by imprisonment and torture to sign an Arian creed. And even the Bishop of Rome, Liberius, who ought to have been a pattern to others, wearied of exile and desperate, purchased his release at the same cost, and, as St. Jerome says, "the whole world groaned, and was astonished to find itself Arian." The constancy of Athanasius can hardly be better told than in the words of our own Richard Hooker. "Only in Athanasius there was nothing observed throughout the course of that long tragedy, other than such as very well became a wise man to do and a righteous man to suffer. So that this was the plain condition of those times; the whole world against

Athanasius, and Athanasius against it; half a hundred years spent in doubtful trial which of the two in the end would prevail, the side which had all, or else the part which had no friend but God and death, the one a defender of his innocency, the other a finisher of all his troubles."

Constantius died and was succeeded by Julian "the Apostate," Julian by Jovian, and Jovian by Valentinian and Valens, who was as Arian in his sympathies as Constantius. The power of Arianism, however, had begun to wane. Athanasius returned to Alexandria in 366 and many bishops had returned to the faith before his death, which occurred in A.D. 373.

Saints of the Fourth Century

In spite of the heresies and schisms which disturbed the Church's peace after the cessation of persecution, the fourth century was pre-eminently an age of saints. Men who were steadfast in the faith in spite of all difficulties and temptations, lived by their faith, and endeavoured to show forth God's praise not only with their lips but in their lives. They had their diversities of gifts, and their human limitations. None of them attained to full perfection; but they were able, each in his measure, to reflect something of the glory of the Lord, and for this reason the Church has kept the names of many of them in thankful remembrance, and as we look back at their lives, we can say of them:

> "These are they who have contended
> For their Saviour's honour long,
> Wrestling on till life was ended,
> Following not the sinful throng."

Some lived in the solitude of the desert, others in the busy haunts of men. Some were men of little or no learning, others studied under the greatest scholars of the day. East, west, north and south, wherever the faith of the Gospel prevailed, there were to be found men who, by their sanctity of life, led men to Christ.

St. Antony the Hermit

Among the writings of St. Athanasius there is an interesting Life of St. Antony, which was probably written while the great bishop was in hiding in the Nitrian desert during

his third exile. Antony is generally spoken of as the father of monasticism, though the beginning of the movement can be traced to the middle of the third century, when Paul of Thebes fled to the desert at the time of the Decian persecution and spent the rest of his life there in solitude, and was visited just before his death by Antony himself.

The attraction of such a life to some men is not hard to understand. It was an attempt to find spiritual strength and communion with God apart from the distractions and temptations of the world; and in the corruptions of society in the last days of paganism, and the laxity that accompanied the Arian ascendancy, the vanities of the world must have been particularly disquieting to devout minds. Then there was scriptural precedent for it. Moses was forty years in the desert of Midian; Elijah too was a man of the desert; and St. John Baptist made his home in the wilderness of Judea.

Antony was a Copt, born in Upper Egypt about A.D. 250, of wealthy Christian parents, both of whom died before he was twenty years of age. He does not seem to have been of either a very studious or devout turn of mind in his youth. One day in church, not long after his mother's death, he was struck with the words of the Gospel, "Sell all thou hast," and a little later when he heard the passage, "Take no thought of the morrow," he felt sure it was meant for him, and commending his sister to the care of some devout women, he gave away all his property, and sought a home for himself in the wilderness. He made his dwelling in a ruined tower about a day's journey from the Red Sea, and there remained for about twenty years, seldom seeing anyone but the friend who brought him bread twice a year, and living a life of great austerity.

When he heard that the Christians of Alexandria were suffering persecution in the year 311, he came forth from his retirement at the risk of his life to visit those who were in prison and to encourage them to withstand the Emperor's edict. When peace came he retired farther than ever from civilization; but many followed him to share his ascetic life and to be under his instruction. From this time on the monastic life held a recognized place in the Church, gradually spreading east and west till it was adopted everywhere.

In his old age Antony visited Alexandria again at the request of St. Athanasius to preach against the Arians, and was gazed at with wonder, by Christians and pagans alike. He died soon after at the age of 105.

Miraculous powers were ascribed to him—healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, prophesying, etc.—and certainly the spiritual power which he exercised was very great. Though he had no training as a theologian, he held men to the faith whom the arguments of Athanasius could not reach. His influence was felt far and wide, and even the Emperor Constantine and his sons wrote to him as a father.

Didymus, the Blind

Contemporary with Antony and Athanasius was another remarkable man, who is not so well known as he ought to be, Didymus the Blind, teacher of the Catechetical School at Alexandria.

It is a mistake to suppose that it is only in these modern days that blind people have been able to overcome their disabilities and make themselves useful. Didymus was born about the year 210, and lost his sight from a disease of the eyes when he was only four years old. Consequently, as he himself says, he never acquired the rudiments of learning. His great force of character, however, and his desire for knowledge to a great extent made up for this disadvantage. As the historian Socrates says, " God made up to him the loss of corporeal vision by bestowing on him greater intellectual perception. For, what he could not learn by seeing he was able to acquire through the sense of hearing, so that, being from his childhood endowed with excellent abilities, he soon far surpassed his youthful companions, who possessed the keenest sight." He learned the letters of the alphabet by means of wooden tablets, on which they were engraved, which he felt with his fingers. He taught himself grammar, logic, music, arithmetic and geometry, and acquired an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures.

Such was his learning and ability that Athanasius deemed him a worthy successor of such men as Clement and Origen and appointed him in 340 to the charge of the Catechetical School, of which he was the last great head.

When Antony came to Alexandria for the defence of the faith against Arianism he visited Didymus and was greatly impressed by the clearness and force of his teaching and said to him, " Do not be distressed, Didymus, for the loss of your bodily eyes, which are the common possession of gnats and flies; but rather rejoice that you have such eyes as angels have, by which you can contemplate the Divine being and perceive inward truth."

Amongst his pupils were Rufinus, afterwards bishop of Aquileia, and Jerome. The latter says, " I went to Alexandria and heard Didymus, and I have much to thank him for. What I did not know I learned from him; and what I knew already I did not forget," And in another place he says, " Didymus, my own Didymus, who has the eyes of the bride in the Song of Songs, those eyes which Jesus bade us lift up to the whitening fields, looking afar into depths and has given us cause to call him, as is our wont, the Seer Prophet."

Most of his works are lost. They included many commentaries on Old and New Testament books, two books against the Arians, and a treatise on the Holy Spirit, which was translated into Latin by Jerome. He died about A.D. 395.

CHAPTER VII

St. Hilary of Poitiers

IT is remarkable that not only Arianism but the other false doctrines concerning our Lord and the Blessed Trinity arose in the East, and it is in the East, too, that most of the great defenders of the faith are found. One notable exception, however, is Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who has been called, from his steadfast defence of the faith, the Athanasius of the West.

Little is known of his early life; but he was probably born about the year 300 either in or near the town from which he takes his name. He received a good education, and was a man of mature years, a well-trained thinker and an accomplished writer before he was converted to Christianity. He was drawn to the faith by a love of truth, and he found in the religion of Jesus Christ the true philosophy. He found much help in the writings of Origen, and he applied himself diligently to the study of Holy Scripture. "Thou didst instruct me," he writes, "in the knowledge of Thyself by means of sacred volumes given us through Thy servants Moses and the prophets. From them I learnt Thy revelation, that we must not worship Thee as a lonely God. . . . And the voices of the Evangelist and Apostles repeat the lesson, and the very words which fell from the holy mouth of Thy only begotten are recorded telling how Thy Son . . . was born of the Virgin to fulfil the mystery of my salvation."

We have no record of his appointment as bishop, but it was about the middle of the century, shortly before Constantius, who upheld the Arian party, became Emperor of the West. Arian bishops were intruded into the neighbouring Sees of Arles and Milan. The Nicene Creed was hardly known as yet in the West, and Hilary says in one of his treatises that some time after he had been made a bishop he had never heard it; yet he states that his belief had

always been that which the creed asserts. In 355 he wrote a letter of protest to Constantius at the injustice done to the orthodox clergy, and asking that those bishops who were in exile might be restored. Hilary's own banishment to Phrygia the next year was probably the result of this letter. He turned his exile to advantage in making a study of the Eastern Churches, and it was at this time that he wrote his chief work on the Trinity. This was a strong statement of the Catholic faith, and it was perhaps because it was thought that he would be a greater force against Arianism in the East than at home that he was recalled from his exile in 360. A few sentences may serve to show the style of the book: "If we assume than an event did not happen because we cannot discover how it was done, we make the limits of our understanding into the limits of reality." "We must clothe ourselves in foolishness that we may gain wisdom; not the foolishness of hazardous conclusions, but the foolishness of a modest sense of our own infirmity, that so the evidence of God's power may teach us truths to which the arguments of earthly philosophy cannot attain."

Hilary was by no means a narrow-minded man. He opposed the Arians in Gaul because he regarded their teaching as subversive of the faith; but in Phrygia he came into contact with many Semi-Arians, and with these he tried to come to an understanding, and bring them back to the faith. Though Hilary and Athanasius suffered exile for the faith at the same time, and were thoroughly in sympathy with one another, they never met. After his return to Poitiers, Hilary spent some time in Italy trying to bring back to the faith those who had fallen away. He died peacefully on January 13th, 368.

Besides being a great theologian, Hilary also has the fame of being the first Latin hymn writer, but his attempt to introduce hymns into the public worship of the Church does not seem to have met with much success, and the few hymns which have come down to us from his time are not of a high order.

St. Martin of Tours

The sketch of Hilary is hardly complete without mention of St. Martin of Tours, who was so intimately

associated with him. Martin was a native of Pannonia (Lower Hungary), and was born of heathen parents in 316, his father being a Roman soldier. His boyhood was spent at Pavia in Italy, and he was so attracted to the Church that at the age of ten, without consulting his parents, he had himself enrolled as a catechumen. When he was fifteen he was compelled to enter the army, and it was after three years of military service that the well-known incident occurred which is always associated with the name of St. Martin. On a cold winter's day while his regiment was stationed at Amiens, he met a poor man at the gate of the city naked and shivering. His comrades took no notice of the man ; but Martin, whose purse was empty, divided his military cloak with his sword, and gave half to the beggar. That night he dreamed that he saw Christ wearing the half cloak, who proclaimed to the angels standing by that Martin, a catechumen, had clothed Him with this garment. He immediately sought baptism, and two years later was permitted to leave the army.

He then visited Hilary, who was anxious to ordain him deacon, but he thought himself unworthy of the office, and set out for his home for the purpose of converting his parents. After a perilous journey he reached Pannonia and succeeded in winning his mother and a number of others to the faith, but he met with severe treatment from the Arians, who drove him out of the country. Hilary was in exile at the time, so Martin did not go to Gaul, but lived a hermit life on a small island near Genoa, and after Hilary's return, in 360, founded, five miles from Poitiers, the first monastery in Gaul, where he spent eleven years, gaining a reputation far and wide for piety and good works.

In 371 he was chosen by popular election as Bishop of Tours, but after his consecration he continued the monastic life, as far as the duties of his office allowed, and had about eighty monks under his care.

The people of the country were still largely heathen, and it was to the labours of St. Martin that the extirpation of paganism was due. He was zealous in defence of the faith, and many miracles were popularly ascribed to him. He died on the 11th of November (Martinmas), 397, and it is said that two thousand monks attended his funeral.

St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

St. Ambrose, the first of the four Latin doctors, was born at Treves, about A.D. 340, of a rich and noble family, and after receiving a liberal education devoted himself to the profession of law, and exhibited such skill and uprightness of character that he was appointed consular magistrate of upper Italy. In this office he won the respect and honour of all. Auxentius, the Arian Bishop of Milan died in 374, while Ambrose was living there, and there was a hot dispute between the Arians and Catholics as to his successor. The consular came to keep peace and was addressing the opposing parties when a child's voice was heard to cry out "Ambrose Bishop." It seemed to both parties a solution of their difficulties. Here was a man in whom they all had confidence and although he was a layman and not yet baptized, there was a general demand that he should be made bishop. His sense of unworthiness had kept him back from baptism, and now he did all in his power to escape from the honour of the episcopate; but the people would listen to no excuse. His appointment was ratified by the Emperor, and he accepted it as the will of God. He was baptized, and eight days later, after passing through the lower orders of the ministry, he was consecrated bishop, distributing his money to the poor and giving his estates to the Church, except a portion reserved for the support of his sister.

It was soon seen that he possessed in a remarkable degree the qualities that go to make a good bishop. He divested himself of his wealth, giving largely to the poor and to the Church, and handing over his estates to his younger brother. Then he devoted himself to theological studies and to the work of his office. He had a reputation for eloquence; he studied in order to be able to teach, and he preached every Sunday and at certain seasons daily. His dealings with Arians and heathens and with the secular powers called for firmness and sound judgment, and he was sometimes involved in serious difficulties. On one occasion the Empress Justina ordered him to give up one of the churches to the Arians, but he refused. Soldiers were sent to take possession, but Ambrose continued in the church, and when the soldiers entered he preached to them

from the lesson of the day, and they would not harm him. He was always ready to help those who needed his assistance, and it was under his teaching and fatherly guidance that Augustine was converted in A.D. 384.

The Bishop and the Emperor

It is an evidence of the influence of Ambrose that when the Roman general, Maximus, raised a rebellion against the Emperor Gratian, who was only a boy, and was preparing to invade Italy, the dowager-empress Justina, although she was an Arian, went to the bishop and besought him to go and dissuade Maximus from his purpose. Ambrose without hesitation undertook the mission and succeeded.

The story of his encounter with the Emperor Theodosius the Great is perhaps the best-known incident in his life. Theodosius was a man of vacillating character. A riot occurred in Thessalonica in 390 in which several Roman officers were killed by the mob. The Emperor ordered a general massacre of the inhabitants of the town. Ambrose protested in the name of God, and Theodosius promised to spare the town. But he changed his mind and the slaughter took place, seven thousand were slain. Ambrose wrote him a kind but firm letter urging him to repentance and saying that he could not celebrate the Holy Eucharist in his presence unless he publicly professed his sorrow.

There is some doubt whether the story is trustworthy that Theodosius presented himself on Christmas Day and Ambrose refused him admittance ; but there is no question that the Emperor submitted to open penance, laying aside his royal insignia and praying with tears for pardon.

The Writings of St. Ambrose

The good bishop died on the night of Good Friday, April 4th, 397, and was laid to rest in the basilica at Milan. He left a number of writings behind him, which comprise theological treatises, expositions of Scripture, sermons, letters and hymns. These latter call for more than a passing allusion.

St. Ambrose is thought to have done much for the enrichment and development, of the worship of the Church, and the Ambrosian liturgy, which has a number of peculiar

features, some of which still survive at Milan, is usually ascribed to him.

It is probable, however, that considerable change was made in the liturgy by his predecessor Auxentius, the Arian, who came from the East, and who was there long enough for the people to become accustomed to his usages. Ambrose's treatise *On the Faith* was written for the Emperor Gratian, who desired a defence of the divinity of Christ, as a preservative against the sophistries of Arianism, when he was setting out for the East to repel the Gothic invasion. Gratian was delighted with it and asked for another *On the Holy Spirit*. Ambrose was a hymn-writer of great merit and also a musician, and it is said that he introduced antiphonal singing into the West. Many of his hymns—there are ninety-two ascribed to him—are used both in their original Latin and in translations at the present day. Perhaps the best known of these are, " O strength and stay upholding all creation," and " The eternal gifts of Christ the King."

This beautiful evening hymn is also his :—

" O Trinity, most blessed light,
O Unity of sovereign might,
As now the fiery sun departs,
Shed Thou Thy beams within our hearts.

To Thee our morning song of praise,
To Thee our evening prayer we raise ;
Thee may our glory evermore
In lowly reverence adore.

The Apostle of the Goths

The fourth century witnessed the immigration of vast hordes of barbarian Goths and Huns from the North and East into Europe, and upon the Church was laid the responsibility of converting these to the faith. It was a tremendous task, but the Church did not shrink from it, and in due time it was successfully accomplished. It was in the reign of the Arian Emperor Constantius that the great mission to the Goths was undertaken, and it is not strange that an Arian was chosen for the work. This was Ulfilas, a man of Cappadocian descent, the son of a Christian captive carried away by the Goths. He was brought up a Christian, though it is doubtful if he ever knew any other than Arian

Christianity. He spoke Gothic but knew Greek as well, and he laboured with great success among the tribes then settled in Dacia, north of the Danube and just outside of the bounds of the Empire. In 340 he was consecrated bishop, probably by Eusebius of Nicomedia. Seven years later the chief of the Ostrogoths, Ahanaric, tried to put down Christianity because it was the religion of the Romans, and Ulfilas with many of his converts removed to Moesia. It was probably from this that he was called " the Moses of the Goths."

About this time he produced his greatest work, the translation of the Scriptures into Gothic. It was a remarkable achievement, for which he had to invent a new alphabet. His translation covered nearly the whole Bible, omitting the books of Kings, which he thought too warlike for the Goths. The subsequent history of Ulfilas is involved in much obscurity. He died in 383.

The Church's Worship in the Fourth Century

It should be of special interest to us, in view of the fact that the Church of England repeatedly appeals to the teaching and practice of the early undivided Church, to gather what information we can concerning the worship of early days, and we are fortunate in having that worship described in some detail by a writer of the middle of the eventful fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem. And it is to be noted that his accounts do not refer to any new form of service, but evidently to that to which he had been accustomed from his youth.

A number of early liturgies have come down to us—the liturgies of St. James, St. Mark, St. Clement, St. Chrysostom and others, and while we need not suppose that these liturgies were written by the men whose names they bear there is every reason to suppose that their main features and much of their wording were handed down from an early date without any great change.

The term Liturgy, it may be said, was applied particularly to the service of the Holy Eucharist, which was the great distinctive service of Christians and was celebrated at least every Lord's Day.

The Liturgy of St. James is the oldest, and was used in the Mother Church of Jerusalem from time immemorial,

and most of the numerous Eastern liturgies of later date are based on it.

In Syria, Egypt, Persia, Rome and Constantinople we find that various liturgical forms were crystallized (so to speak) in the fifth century; and these must have grown up long before that time. Now in all these various forms there is a substantial agreement in general features, so much so that a Christian, from whatever part of the world he might come, going into a church on Sunday when the Eucharist was celebrated, would recognize that the service was essentially the same as his own.

First of all, the service was always divided into two parts —the preparatory part which was open to all, and the service proper, from which the unbaptized and excommunicate were excluded. The first part consisted chiefly of Scripture lessons—particularly the Epistle and Gospel—and the sermon. The second part, which began with the Kiss of Peace, comprised the Preface, the Consecration, the Great Intercession and the Communion.

The familiar words, "Lift up your hearts," with the response, "We lift them up unto the Lord," are found in every liturgy, as well as the form, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts." There is also in all liturgies of the East a prayer for the sending of the Holy Ghost upon the elements of bread and wine, that they may become the Body and Blood of Christ. The Intercession for the living and the departed was also universal, ending with the Lord's Prayer, after which came the Communion.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Cyril was probably born in or near Jerusalem in A.D. 318, and was ordained priest by Maximus, Bishop of Jerusalem in 345. Three years later the bishop entrusted him with the important duty of instructing the candidates for baptism. Cyril was elevated to the episcopate after the death of Maximus in 351. He was involved to some extent in the Arian controversy, but he was better known as a pastor than as a controversialist, and we are chiefly concerned with his remarkable Catechetical Lectures, delivered in 348. There are twenty-three of these, of which the first eighteen were addressed to those preparing for baptism, and deal with the preparation of the mind, the need of

repentance, the nature and importance of baptism, and the chief points of the faith. The remaining five treat of the ritual of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion.

The first part of the Eucharistic service is not described, because the candidates were already familiar with it. First he speaks of the washing of the priest's hands, "a symbol that ye ought to be pure from all sinful and unlawful deeds." Next is the Kiss of Peace, "the sign that our souls are mingled together, and banish all remembrance of wrongs."

"After this the Priest cries aloud, 'Lift up your hearts,' . . . Then ye answer, 'We lift them up unto the Lord' . . . Then the priest says, 'Let us give thanks unto the Lord.' . . . Then ye say, 'It is meet and right'; for in giving thanks we do a meet thing and a right. . . . After this we make mention of heaven and earth and sea; of sun and moon; of stars and all creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible; of Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Thrones; of the Cherubim with many faces; in effect repeating David's call, 'Magnify the Lord with me.' We make mention, too, of the Seraphim, whom Isaiah in the Holy Spirit saw standing round the throne of God, with two of their wings veiling their face and with twain their feet, while with twain they did fly, crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts,' . . . Then having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before Him; that He may make the Bread the Body of Christ and the Wine the Blood of Christ; for whatsoever the Holy Ghost has touched is surely sanctified and changed. Then . . . we entreat God for the common peace of our churches, for the welfare of the world, for Kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted, and in a word for all who stand in need of succour we all pray and offer this sacrifice. Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition. Then, on behalf also of the holy fathers and bishops who have fallen asleep, and in a word all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a great benefit to the souls for whom

supplication is put up while that holy and awful sacrifice is set forth. . . . Then after these things, we say that prayer which our Saviour delivered to his own disciples, saying, 'Our Father which art in heaven.' . . . After this the priest says, 'Holy things to holy men.' . . . Then ye hear the chanter inviting you with a sacred melody to the communion of the Holy Mysteries, saying, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.' Trust not to the judgment of thy bodily palate; but to faith unfaltering. . . . In approaching come not with wrists extended, or fingers spread, but make thy left hand a throne for the right, as for that which is to receive a King. And having hollowed thy palm, receive the Body of Christ, saying over it, 'Amen.'" Similar direction is given for reverently receiving the cup. "Then wait for prayer and give thanks unto God, who has accounted thee worthy of so great mysteries."

CHAPTER VIII

Contending for the Faith

THE century which followed the Council of Nicæa was a time of theological controversy concerning the nature and person of Christ. No sooner was the attack successfully resisted from one direction than it reappeared from another. The belief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God was the foundation-stone of the faith, and it seemed as if Satan exercised all his wiles to take away this precious truth from men. It was the work of the General Councils to safeguard it; but the objections raised against it were most plausible, and, like the rationalistic attacks of the present day, seemed to spring from a sincere desire to arrive at the truth. Then for every attack God raised up competent defenders.

We have already seen something of the labours of Athanasius in the East and Hilary in the West, but in spite of these Arianism flourished for a number of years and seemed to hold the field against the faith of the Church. But it lacked moral and spiritual power, and the Emperor Julian, who had been brought up under Arian teaching, became an apostate and tried to restore the old pagan religion, though it is said that when he had received his death wound in battle in A.D. 363 he cried out, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered."

It was a reaction from Arianism, which denied that our Lord was truly God when teachers arose who said that He was not truly man, thus robbing man of the comfort which came from the thought He was "made like unto His brethren," and "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

St. Gregory Nazianzen

After Athanasius had passed away, his mantle may be said to have fallen upon the shoulders of a group of younger theologians who are spoken of as "the three

Cappadocians." These were Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa. Cappadocia was a province of Asia Minor south of the Black Sea and west of Armenia, in what we should now consider an out-of-way part of the world; but it was within easy reach of the imperial city of Constantinople, which was then a centre of Greek culture.

The first of the three Cappadocians takes his name from the town of Nazianzus where his father, also named Gregory, was bishop. The date of his birth is uncertain, but it was probably about 325, the year of the Council of Nicea. He was sent to school at Cæsarea, the capital of the province, where he was under the care of a good master who looked after his spiritual as well as his intellectual development, and for whom Gregory always entertained the highest regard. It was here that his lasting and intimate friendship with Basil began. He afterwards studied at Cæsarea in Palestine, Alexandria and Athens, and at the latter city was rejoiced to have Basil again for a companion. Prince Julian, commonly called the Apostate, was also a student at the university at that time.

Gregory spent ten years or more at Athens, and when he left there in 356 he had no definite plans for his future, but he accepted an invitation from Basil to join at Pontus, where he had given himself up to monastic life. Here they lived happily in the daily round of prayer, meditation, study and manual labour, until the elder Gregory, who was not a theologian, in common with most other bishops, under pressure from the Emperor Constantius subscribed an Arian creed, and his son came to reclaim him to orthodoxy. It was about the year 361 that Gregory was persuaded, much against his inclination, to be ordained to the priesthood, that he might assist his father, who was beginning to feel the infirmities of age; but he thought he had made a mistake, and again returned to his monastic life. A few years later, his friend Basil, who in the meantime had been raised to the episcopate, persuaded him to become Bishop of Sasima, a wretched little place in Cappadocia, which he was glad to leave to become coadjutor to his father at Nazianzus. He was, however, known as a scholar and a brilliant orator, and it was not strange that the small band of Catholic Christians at Constantinople in 379 asked

him to be their bishop. He accepted, and the five orations which he delivered there in defence of the Church's faith in the Trinity won for him the title of "The Theologian," and when the Arian ascendancy was over and Theodosius became emperor, he was transferred to the cathedral church, and the next year (A.D. 381) he was solemnly enthroned as Archbishop of the Imperial City, and became President of the Second General Council, which met at Constantinople that year. His episcopate was, however, a short one. He was weary with controversy and broken in health, and in 384 the Emperor reluctantly gave his consent to his resignation, and he went back to spend his remaining years in seclusion at his old home near Nazianzus. He died in the year 390.

St. Basil the Great

Basil, already noted as the friend of Gregory Nazianzen, was born at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, of Christian parents, about A.D. 330, and was educated at Cæsarea, at Constantinople and at Athens, under the most famous teachers of the day. He went back to Cæsarea in 355 and established himself as a teacher of rhetoric, and was in danger of being led away by the admiration and flattery of the people; but the warning and good sense of his sister Macrina saved him, and he determined to give himself up to a life of self-denial. He set out to travel through Egypt and Syria to study the monastic system, and on his return in 358 he took up his abode in a retired place in Pontus, near the home of his childhood. He thought it better to have companions in his study and devotion than to live in solitude, and he persuaded Gregory to share his life, but only for a short time. Basil spent five years, living a life of great austerity, writing powerful treatises in defence of the faith, and gaining a wide reputation for sanctity.

When Julian the Apostate came to the throne in 361, he invited his old friend and fellow-student to come to Constantinople, and was much annoyed that Basil would not come. Eusebius, the Church historian, who had held a high position as a Roman magistrate, was chosen Bishop of Cæsarea in 362, and desiring to avail himself of Basil's theological knowledge, he ordained him priest, but he grew jealous of Basil's popularity and Basil returned to his

monastery, until Eusebius recalled him when the Arian controversy again grew keen, and Eusebius died in his arms in the year 370. The election of a successor was hotly contested, but Basil was chosen, and the elder Gregory of Nazianzus consecrated him. He proved himself a strong leader of the Church in troublous times, and one of his few mistakes was in establishing a new diocese of Sasima and pressing it upon his friend Gregory that he might have him at hand. Among the works which Basil has left are a valuable treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, and a Liturgy, which, with some alterations, is used in the Greek Church to-day. He died on January 1st, A.D. 379.

St. Gregory Nyssen

The third of the great Cappadocians was Gregory of Nyssa, a younger brother of Basil. Of his early years little is known. He had taken up the profession of a teacher of rhetoric, when, in the year 371, his brother Basil, with the same masterful insistency which he had used to get the other Gregory to Sasima, urged upon him the bishopric of the little town of Nyssa, some ten miles from Cæsarea. Gregory was shy and easily imposed upon and not fitted for the government of the Church, and his whole life at Nyssa was a series of persecutions, chiefly brought upon him by the Arians because of his uncompromising teaching of the Trinity and the incarnation. He was banished for a time, but after the death of the Arian Emperor, Valens, in 378, he returned and was enthusiastically received, and after Basil's death he was recognized as the ablest defender of the Nicene faith. He was present at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and was preacher at the enthronement of his friend Gregory Nazianzen at that time. His death occurred about 395. A number of his writings have come down to us, the most important of which is his *Catechetical Discourse*, intended to show what arguments might best be used to bring Jews and Gentiles respectively to the knowledge of the truth.

St. Jerome

The Church of England has always, in her authoritative utterances and in the teaching of her theologians, appealed to the testimony of the early Fathers, and more particularly

to those of the first six centuries. Of these a few who were pre-eminent came to be known as " Doctors of the Church." This term is applied to four Greek theologians, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom, while the four Latin Doctors are Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory the Great. Of these Jerome stands out as not only one of the most learned men of his day, but as one of the greatest scholars of all time.

Eusebius Hieronymus was his name, but that was shortened by English writers to Jerome, or Hierome, as it is in the VIth Article. He was born about A.D. 346, at Stridon, a small town, afterwards destroyed by the Goths, somewhere between the head of the Adriatic and the Danube. His parents were well-to-do, and gave him a liberal education in Greek and Latin literature and rhetoric, which was the chief study of those days.

Although his parents were Christians, he was brought up unbaptized, which was no uncommon thing in the fourth century, and seems to have thought little about religious matters until he came to Rome to study, where he was brought under Christian influence, and was baptized by Bishop Liberius sometime before 366. He visited Gaul and Sicily in search of knowledge, making many warm friends and some enemies wherever he went ; for he was of a somewhat passionate and resentful disposition and expressed himself strongly in controversy. Amongst his friends were Rufinus of Aquileia, with whom he afterwards carried on a bitter controversy, and Evagrius of Antioch, in whose company he visited the chief places in Asia Minor and Syria.

It was while he was at Antioch that he had a severe attack of fever, and while his friends stood around expecting him to die, he thought he was caught up in spirit to his final judgment and condemned as not being a Christian but a Ciceronian, and preferring worldly literature to Christ. " Thenceforth," he says, " I read the books of God with greater zeal than I had previously given to the books of men." Soon after this he resolved to adopt the monastic life and to devote himself to sacred study, and particularly to the interpretation of Scripture. He was about twenty-eight when he retired to the Syrian deserts, where he spent five years in solitude, except for the converse that he had

with other hermits of the neighbourhood, doing sufficient manual work to gain a livelihood and practising great austerities. It was at this time he began the study of Hebrew under the instruction of a Christian Jew. After a theological controversy which made his relations with those about him strained, he went again to Antioch, where, against his will, he was ordained presbyter in 379. It is doubtful whether he ever exercised his office.

The Council of Constantinople

From Antioch he went to Constantinople, where he was a pupil of Gregory Nazianzen, who was bishop of the orthodox Church in the Imperial City, and he must have been there during the meeting of the Second General Council, which was summoned in 381 by the Emperor Theodosius to deal with important questions of doctrine and discipline, but for some unknown reason he has left us no account of it. There were 150 bishops present at this council, all of them from the East, including Cyril of Jerusalem, the two Gregories (of Nyssa and Nazianzus) and Meletius the aged bishop of Antioch, who presided at first, and died suddenly while the council was in session.

Gregory had just been enthroned as archbishop and naturally succeeded Meletius as President. One of the most important subjects considered by the council was the error of Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, who taught that, while our Lord had a human body and natural or animal soul, the Divine Word took the place of the rational and spiritual soul. This meant that He was not "very man," but a Divine person clothed in the physical nature of a man. This teaching was condemned by the decrees of the council, which were accepted by the whole Church, and for this reason the Council of Constantinople is esteemed an Ecumenical Council. It is a remarkable fact that Jerome had sat as a pupil at the feet both of Apollinaris who was condemned at this council and of Gregory who presided. He says of the former, "I frequently listened to Apollinaris and attended his lectures, yet though he instructed me in the Holy Scriptures, I never embraced his disputable doctrine."

Searching the Scriptures

In 382 Pope Damasus required Jerome's assistance and sent for him to come to Rome, where he spent three years. During this time he revised the Latin version of the Psalms from the Greek of the Septuagint, and also revised the very faulty edition of the New Testament then in use. He still felt strongly his vocation to the monastic life, and while he was in Rome he did much for the promotion of asceticism. Amongst those who came under his influence was a wealthy and noble lady Paula, who with several other ladies decided to adopt the conventual life under Jerome's direction.

After the death of Damasus Jerome determined to leave Rome and seek a retreat in Palestine, but before settling there he made the acquaintance of Didymus, "the blind seer," at Alexandria, and visited the monks of the Nitrian desert. He settled finally at Bethlehem in 386, where he spent the remaining thirty-four years of his life. Paula became the head of a convent for women at the same place, and established a hospice for pilgrims who came to visit the holy places. Jerome died in 420 on September 30th, on which day he is commemorated in our Prayer Book calendar.

His life was simple. "Having food and raiment we are content. Where there is cheap cabbage and household bread, and a sufficiency to eat and drink, riches are superfluous." Monks from all parts came to visit him. He had classes of young men and he expounded the Scriptures daily to the brethren of the monastery. Translations, letters, commentaries and controversial works flowed constantly from his pen. His Old Testament works were based upon the Hebrew, which he studied diligently under Jewish Rabbis. His letters are full of interest and very copious.

The great work of St. Jerome, however, was the Latin version of the Bible known as the *Vulgate*, which means the popular, or generally accepted version. This name was applied to a very inferior version before, but Jerome's gradually superseded it. The older version was made from the Greek, and so was a translation of a translation. The translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew was the work of fifteen years. It was issued in fragments, as he was

able to prepare it, with a preface to each part, and the whole was completed in the year 405. So many changes were made for the sake of accuracy that great fault was found with it, and Jerome was charged with wilfully corrupting the Scriptures and attempting to alter the faith. He was very sensitive to criticism, and it was a weakness of his character that he was resentful and bitter in controversy. His wonderful translation, however, won its way and has been for many centuries to the whole Latin Church what the King James version of 1611 has been to English-speaking people, and it had the distinction of being the first book printed in 1455.

St. John Chrysostom

The name at least of St. Chrysostom has become well known from the fact that the "Prayer of St. Chrysostom" is said twice a day wherever the Prayer Book is followed. In the Book of Homilies he is called "that godly clerk and great preacher." In the revision of the Calendar his name will be found opposite January 27th, the day on which his body was laid to rest in the Imperial City. He was known in his own day, and for some time after, as John of Constantinople, and it was in the sixth century that, on account of his wonderful eloquence, the surname "Chrysostom" (golden-mouthed) came to be applied to him.

He was born at Antioch about A.D. 347 of a distinguished Greek family. His father, who was an officer of high rank, died while John was an infant, and the young widow devoted herself to the education of her son, striving to keep him pure in the midst of a profligate city, and to implant in his mind the seeds of Christian piety. He studied under the famous pagan orator and rhetorician Libanius, who had been the tutor of Basil the Great, and amongst his fellow-students was Theodore, afterwards Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia and a celebrated Biblical scholar. It is said that when Libanius was asked on his death-bed who was best fitted to succeed him he replied, "John, if the Christians had not taken him from us."

After completing his education he entered upon the practice of law, and he would soon have won distinction as an advocate; but he had no heart for litigation. Like

Timothy, he had known the Scriptures from a child ; and the influence of his mother and of the good Bishop Meletius brought about a great change in his life, and his baptism at the age of twenty-three—for, like so many of that period, he had been brought up unbaptized—meant for him entire dedication to the service of Christ, and very soon after this he was admitted to the office of lector, and thus qualified to read the lessons in church.

In his desire to free himself from the corruptions of the world, he was drawn to the monastic life, and he would have taken it up in company with his intimate friend Basil—not the great Bishop of Cæsarea—but his mother's entreaties restrained him, and instead he lived a life of strict asceticism at home. Two of his friends, Maximus and Theodore, joined him, and they studied the Scriptures under Diodorus, a well-known defender of the faith, who was head of the School at Antioch.

From Monk to Patriarch

Several bishoprics in Syria fell vacant, and amongst those who were thought suitable to fill them were John and his friend Basil, though neither was yet ordained. So great was John's sense of the dignity of the priestly office that he shrank from undertaking it, but, when Basil proposed that they should act together in declining or accepting, John agreed. When the time of consecration came, however, he hid himself and Basil, never thinking that his friend would deceive him, was consecrated alone. In justification of his conduct John wrote his famous treatise *On the Priesthood*, which is interesting as showing in what esteem the sacred ministry was held at that time : " They who inhabit the earth and make their abode there are entrusted with the administration of the things of heaven." Speaking of the kind of man needed for the work of a bishop, he says, " He should be dignified, yet free from arrogance ; severe yet kind ; able to govern yet sociable ; impartial yet courteous ; humble but not servile ; strong, yet gentle ; that he may contend successfully against difficulties."

After the death of his mother he retired to a monastery, where he spent six years in study and devotion ; but his health broke down under the rigorous discipline and he

returned to Antioch. He was ordained deacon in 381, shortly before Meletius left to attend the Council of Constantinople, and he spent five busy years in that inferior office. Flavian, who succeeded Meletius as Bishop of Antioch, raised him to priesthood in 386, and made him preacher at the Cathedral Church. Antioch was a rich and licentious city of 200,000 inhabitants, of whom half were nominally Christians, but these were divided by heresy and schism. During Lent Chrysostom fearlessly attacked the luxury and immorality of the city, and the Church was crowded whenever he preached. His fame as a preacher reached its height, however, in 387, in consequence of an uprising against the Emperor Theodosius, in which the statues of the imperial family were thrown down and dragged through the streets. It was feared that some dreadful punishment would be imposed for the indignity, and Flavian set out at once to supplicate the Emperor's pardon, while Chrysostom, during the suspense, delivered a course of twenty-one sermons "*On the Statues*," to comfort the people and exhort them to correct their vices. Here is a specimen of his plain speaking : " I desire to ask one favour of you in return for this address, which is, that you will correct on my behalf the blasphemers of this city. Should you hear anyone in the public thoroughfare, or in the forum, blaspheming God, go up to him and rebuke him ; and should it be necessary to inflict blows, spare not to do so. Smite him on the face ; strike his mouth ; sanctify your hand with the blow, and if anyone accuse you, and drag you to the court of justice, go with them, and when the judge on the bench calls you to account, say boldly that the man blasphemed the King of angels ! "

He was a great moral force at Antioch, and we have number of Homilies and Commentaries during his seventeen years spent there. In the year 397 he was chosen, against his own remonstrance, as Archbishop of Constantinople, and was consecrated by Theophilus of Alexandria, who afterwards was his bitter enemy. He administered the diocese with a firm hand, sent missionaries to the Gothic and Scythian tribes on the Danube, and, as Patriarch, composed the troubles in the Church of Ephesus. In one of his sermons he offended the Empress Eudoxia by a reference to Jezebel which she interpreted as meant for

her, and from that time on she tried to compass his downfall. Through her agency a secret council, known as " The Synod of the Oak," was held near Chalcedon in 403, consisting chiefly of Egyptian bishops, with Theophilus at their head, and a sentence for the deposition and banishment of Chrysostom on false charges was passed and he was put on board a ship for Bithynia. An earthquake the next day so frightened Eudoxia that she had Chrysostom brought back, and there was great rejoicing among the people. The next year, however, she succeeded in having him banished again to Cucusus, a lonely mountain village in Armenia ; but even here his influence was felt, and no less than 230 letters are extant, written during the three years he spent there. He was then ordered to be removed to Pityus, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, a still more inhospitable spot, where he was to reach by a three months' journey on foot ; but, worn with age and sickness, he died on the way on September 14th, 407.

John Chrysostom was one of the Church's truest saints— " a pure man, a practical Christian and a King of preachers," and the ideals of the priesthood which he set forth in his earliest treatise were to a large extent fulfilled in his own life. He was the most prolific writer among the Greek Fathers, and is reckoned as one of the four Doctors of the Eastern Church.

CHAPTER IX

The Saintly Mother of a Saint

THERE are few more beautiful characters in the history of the early Church than Monnica the mother of the great St. Augustine. Her patience, her faithfulness, her devotion and her tender affection make her a pattern for all Christian women. She was born of Christian parents, and was carefully brought up, and while still quite young was married to Patricius, of Tagaste in North Africa, a man of unrestrained passions, who after many years was "won by the conversation of his wife" to the religion of Christ and received baptism shortly before his death. Augustine, who was born when his mother was twenty-three years old, was not their only child, but we have very little knowledge of the others, and we only know of Monnica's devotion to him through his *Confessions*.

Augustine was given a liberal education, and his father died, leaving him to his mother's care, while he was still in his youth. It is not to be wondered at that in the midst of the corrupting influences of that age, in spite of the prayers and admonitions of his mother, the young man was led away to unbelief and fell into dissolute habits. "I fell among men proudly raving," he says, "very carnal and voluble, in whose mouths were the snares of the devil." While Monnica was grieving over his spiritual ruin, a voice came to her in a dream bidding her not despair, and when she took counsel of a certain bishop he assured her that the son of so many tears could not perish.

When he determined, contrary to his mother's wishes, to go to Italy, she would have gone with him, but he went off without her knowledge. She followed, however, and was with him in Milan; where he was engaged in teaching, and where he soon came under the influence of St. Ambrose. "I came to Milan," he says in his *Confessions*, "unto

Ambrose, the bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, whose eloquent discourse did at that time strenuously dispense unto Thy people the flour of Thy wheat. . . . That man of God received me like a father, and looked with a benevolent and episcopal kindness on my change of abode. And I began to love him, not at first indeed as a teacher of truth, which I quite despaired of in Thy Church, but as a man friendly to myself. . . . And whilst I opened my heart to admit 'how skilfully he spoke,' there also entered with it, but gradually, 'and how truly he spoke'!"

Finally his eyes were opened to the truth, and after careful preparation he was baptized at Milan by St. Ambrose on April 25th, 387.

During the sojourn at Milan, Monnica had devoted herself to good works and attended the daily service at the church. The desire of her life, however, was now fulfilled, and she set out soon after Augustine's baptism to return to her African home, but died at Ostia, in her son's arms, in the fifty-sixth year of her age. A beautiful description is given by St. Augustine of her last days, when

> "Together 'neath the Italian heaven
> They sat, the mother and her son,
> He late from her by errors riven,
> Now both in Jesus one."

It had been her wish to be buried beside her husband, Patricius, but just before her death she said to her son, "Lay this body anywhere, let not the care of it trouble you at all. This only I ask, that you will remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you may be."

The Confessions of St. Augustine

The most famous of his writings of St. Augustine was his book of *Confessions*, of which a modern scholar says it is "the most edifying book in all patristic literature." Augustine himself says: "The thirteen books of my *Confessions*, whether they refer to my evil or my good, praise the just and good God, and stimulate the heart and mind to approach unto Him." They were the earliest of his great writings.

After the death of Monnica, in company with two friends,

he spent three years in retirement, living a kind of monastic life on an estate near his native town of Tagaste. In 391 he went to Hippo Regius, where the bishop urged him to stay and ordained him, and four years later he became Bishop of Hippo. It was two years after this that he wrote his *Confessions*, a work which has become one of the great devotional classics of the Church.

The first ten books are biographical, and tell the story of his life from infancy up to the time of his mother's death. He begins with a very beautiful invocation of God, as the soul's greatest desire and need. "Let me die," he says, "that I die not, that I may see Thy face. . . . Cramped is the dwelling of my soul; expand it that Thou mayest enter in. It is in ruins, do Thou restore it." He then tells of his childhood and youth, his temptations, his falls, his religious doubts, his wretchedness.

The story of his conversion is one of the most interesting parts of the *Confessions*. For a long while he was in an unsettled and unhappy state, until at last the crisis came. Flinging himself down under a fig-tree, in tears, he heard a child's voice from a neighbouring house repeating, "Take up and read, take up and read"; and he took it as a message to himself. Remembering how St. Antony received his call in the words of the Gospel which he chanced to hear, he sought the book of St. Paul's epistles which he had been reading, and on opening it his eyes lighted upon the words: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." Instantly light seemed to flash into his soul and his doubts vanished.

After describing this experience he tells of his baptism on Easter Eve, of his mother's joy and of her peaceful passing away at Ostia.

Then he goes on to describe how God may be found. Here is a passage which everyone should know: "I asked the earth and it answered, 'I am not He,' and whatsoever are therein made the same confession. I asked the sea and the deeps, and the creeping things that lived, and they replied, 'We are not thy God, seek higher.' I asked the breezy air, and the universal air with its inhabitants answered, 'Anaximenes was deceived, I am not God.'

I asked the heavens, the sun, moon and stars—' Neither, say they, are we the God whom thou seekest.' And I answered unto all these things which stand about the door of my flesh, ' Ye have told me concerning my God that ye are not He ; tell me something about Him.' And with a loud voice they exclaimed, ' He made us.' My questioning was my observing of them ; and their beauty was their reply."

The Great Doctor of the West

St. Augustine is generally regarded as the greatest of the Western Doctors. He was a voluminous writer, and his collected works fill eleven large, closely printed volumes, averaging about 2000 pages each. While he was not St. Jerome's equal as a scholar, he had a well-trained mind and a profound knowledge of Holy Scripture, but, from his lack of knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, he was in some cases misled by the inaccuracies of the Latin version which he used. He devoted all his talents to the defence of the Church against error and the vindication of Christian truth. There was no important question of his time which he did not discuss, and his teaching has exercised a very great influence upon Western Christendom. He was a skilful controversialist, but was sometimes carried away by his feelings, and for this reason his conclusions are not always satisfactory ; but, with rare honesty and candour he acknowledged many of his errors later in his *Retractations*.

Before his conversion he had been troubled with intellectual doubts, and thought he had found a " rational " religion in Manichæism. This was a system inaugurated a century before by a certain man named Mani, or Manes, from Babylonia, who claimed a Divine mission, and was ambitious to attain as much fame as Buddha had won in India, and Jesus in the West. He saw the constant struggle of good and evil in the world, which he endeavoured to explain by saying that there were two eternal principles of light and darkness ever warring against each other. The opposition between the flesh and the spirit he explained by saying that all that was material was evil. The material creation then must be evil and could not have come from the good God. Then it followed that

Christ did not really take upon Him our flesh, and there was no death upon the Cross, and no true Resurrection. In some respects the Manichæan ideas are reproduced at the present day in the name of Christian Science.

Augustine had held these theories for nearly nine years, and was able to judge them fairly, and he meets them very effectively. His defence of the Old Testament is particularly good. The Manichæans rejected it altogether and denied that it came from the good God. St. Augustine shows how Christ himself bore witness to its truth and inspiration, claiming that the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him, and he says that the Old Testament can only be understood in the light of the knowledge of Christ. In the New Testament those truths are revealed which in the Old Testament lay concealed.

For the Unity of the Church

The Donatists, after nearly a hundred years of separation from the Church, were still a powerful body in North Africa, but, now that all those who were originally to blame for the schism had passed away, Augustine felt it his duty as a Bishop of the Church, to try, by kindness and persuasion to bring about reunion. A conference was held in 411 at which Augustine was the chief speaker, and after that he wrote a number of letters and treatises on the subject with very good effect.

The question of the validity of ordinations and sacraments ministered by those who were in error or in sin was a prominent one. Augustine's position was that the sacraments are holy in themselves through the action of Christ, quite apart from the worthiness of those who minister them, and they who receive them in faith are partakers of the grace which comes from Christ. Nevertheless those who have voluntarily cut themselves off from the communion of the Church, instead of forbearing one another in love and endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, would receive no benefit from their sacraments, for without charity they profit them nothing.

The Donatists held that holiness was the test of the Church, and they who lived holy lives belonged to the true Church. Augustine replied that there was but one Church,

namely, that which can be traced back to the Apostles, and that our Lord Himself had taught that in it the good and bad should be found together. "No one," he said, "can have Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, unless he belongs to Christ's Body." Unfortunately, when persuasion failed to produce the desired effect, Augustine tried coercion, and his sanction of persecution of the Donatists afforded a precedent for the work of the Inquisition in a later age.

Free Will and Grace

There was another error of a different kind which arose in the Church at that time. It sprang from the teaching of a British monk called Pelagius, a man of irreproachable character, who came to Rome in 409 and was much shocked at the looseness of living which he found there. He preached vehemently against it, and against the excuse offered that it was only the weakness of human nature. He said that it was within the power of all men to live good lives; that all were as free as Adam was, and that when they sinned they were only abusing their gift of free will. The tendency of his teaching was to encourage spiritual pride, and self-sufficiency, as if there was no need of Divine grace, or of the personal action of the Holy Spirit. Exception was soon taken to his doctrine, and he was condemned at a synod held at Carthage in A.D. 412. Augustine, whose own spiritual experience had taught him the necessity and the power of the grace of God, took a strong stand against Pelagius, and in exposing his errors put forth extreme doctrines which were not afterwards accepted by the Church. Mankind, he said, inherited from Adam a nature that was utterly corrupt, "without God and without hope." God's grace, he truly thought, was necessary for salvation, but he added that this grace is not offered to all, but only to those who are predestined and called by an eternal decree, and that for such the taint of original sin is washed away in baptism. When children die unbaptized, he said God did not will that they should be saved, and so caused them to die before baptism could be administered. He only stopped short of the idea of a positive decree of perdition.

His ideas of sacramental grace were very high. By baptism the infant is "delivered from that condemnation which by one man entered into the world. He that does

not believe this, and thinks it impossible, is assuredly an unbeliever." Of the Eucharist he says: "Was not Christ offered up once for all in His own person as a sacrifice? and yet, is He not likewise offered up in the sacrament as a sacrifice, not only in the special solemnities of Easter, but daily in our congregations?" And, he adds, "in a certain manner the sacrament of Christ's body is Christ's body, and the sacrament of Christ's blood is Christ's blood."

The City of God

The greatest of Augustine's works was his *City of God*, the composition of which occupied about thirteen years. The occasion of his writing it was the sacking of Rome by the Goths, under Alaric, in A.D. 410, when the barbarian hordes were almost as ruthless in their destruction of life and property as the Germans in Belgium and France except that they spared the churches. Many said that it was because of the desertion of the ancient gods that the city was overthrown, and Augustine attempts to refute this idea. The gods, he says, never gave any protection, and it was the vices of the Roman people which brought about their destruction. He then contrasts the earthly state with the true city of God, showing that the latter was the purpose of God from the foundation of the world, and that all history was leading up to it. This is the Kingdom of Christ which shall never be destroyed.

Augustine died in the year 430, in the seventh-sixth year of his age, and he is commemorated in our calendar on the day of his death, August 28th.

John Cassian

The sketch of St. Augustine and his times would be incomplete without some notice of the Gallican monk, John Cassian, who had the courage to question Augustine's view on predestination. Cassian was born about A.D. 360 and died about 440. He was brought up in a monastery at Bethlehem, and afterwards spent seven years in studying monasticism in Egypt, which he fully describes in his writings. He was ordained deacon at Constantinople by St. Chrysostom and priest at Rome. He then went to Marseilles, where he founded two monasteries, one for men and the other for women. He is regarded as the organizer of Western monasticism, and the famous Benedictine Rule drawn up a century later borrowed largely from Cassian's *Institutes*.

In the Pelagian controversy Cassian took a position which is spoken of as Semi-Palagian. He differed materially from Pelagius in acknowledging that all men were involved in the sin of Adam, but he could not accept what he considered Augustine's fatalistic tendency in limiting God's goodwill to a fixed number and denying that the possibility of attaining salvation lay within the reach of all. He made an honest attempt to vindicate human responsibility, but his mistake was in teaching that it was not Divine grace but man's own will which first directs him to seek salvation through Christ. It has been said that "St. Augustine regards man in his natural state as dead, Pelagius as sound and well, Cassian as sick."

Vincent of Lerins

A notable contemporary of Cassian's was Vincent of Lerins, who was a priest in the monastery on the small island of Lerins near Antibes on the south coast of France. The book by which he is known is his *Commonitorium*, in which he discusses the test of heresy—First comes the authority of Holy Scriptures, but as different men interpret this differently there must be added the witness of the Church. Then he lays down what has come to be known as the "Vincentian Canon," that we hold that as true which has been "believed everywhere, always and by all" (*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*). Those who add anything new to the faith, he says (echoing the words of Athanasius) stand condemned. "The true Catholic is he who loves the truth of God, who loves Christ's body, the Church; who puts God's truth before all things, before the authority the affection, the genius, the eloquence, the philosophy of any individual." The decrees of councils have only made clearer what was already believed and practised.

There is great similarity in places between the language of Vincent and that of the Athanasian Creed, a fact which has led to the belief that the *Quicumque Vult* was either written by Vincent or at least emanated from the monastery of Lerins. It was a brother of Vincent, Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, who was sent with Germanus of Auxerre (St. German) to Britain in A.D. 429 to counteract the Pelagian teaching there.

CHAPTER X

St. Patrick

THERE is good reason for the supposition that St. Patrick, "the Apostle of Ireland," lived for a time at the monastery of Lerins, and that he was consecrated by St. German. The history of his life is rather obscure, and we do not know with certainty the year of his birth or of his death. He was born in Scotland and carried off to Ireland when he was sixteen, and was for seven years a slave to a chieftain named Milchu, but from the time of his escape until his return at the age of forty-five at the head of a mission to convert the Irish there is no reliable information. The stories that he visited Rome and that he studied with St. Martin of Tours are highly improbable; but he may have known both Cassian and St. Vincent. He certainly spent some years in Gaul and was ordained there. Of his missionary work in Ireland it is unnecessary to write in detail. He landed first at Wicklow, where he was received by the pagans with a shower of stones, and thence he made his way northward as far as the hill of Tara, where, after successfully withstanding an attack from King Laoghaire, he baptized many converts, including the King himself. Leaving Tara he went west to Connaught, where he spent seven years, and thence passed to Ulster and founded the Metropolitan Church of Armagh in A.D. 445. According to the best authorities he died at extreme old age about A.D. 493.

The Rise of Nestorianism

When St. Augustine died the East was engaged in a theological controversy of such a serious nature that it was thought necessary to summon a General Council to settle it. Curiously enough the trouble arose from the intolerant zeal for orthodoxy of the Patriarch of Constantinople,

Nestorius. This man, who was raised to the episcopate in 428, and who had as a monk a reputation for eloquence, was a pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the honoured and beloved friend of Chrysostom; but he had the failing of being able to see only one side of the truth. He was as zealous for the faith as the Inquisitors of a later age. "Give me the earth purged of heretics," he said to the Emperor, "and I will give you heaven as a recompense," and he began to persecute Arians, Novatians and Quartodecimans (who kept Easter on the 14th day of the month) with as much rigour as he dared to exercise. The Apollinarians, who denied that our Lord was truly man, and who were condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381, came in for special condemnation, and a priest whom Nestorius had brought with him from Antioch, in a sermon against this heresy said, "Let no man call Mary Theotokos (Mother of God) for it is not possible that God should be born of a woman." These words aroused great opposition, for "Theotokos" was the title always applied to the blessed Virgin as signifying that Christ who was born of her was not mere man but was truly Divine. Unfortunately Nestorius, in spite of the fact that his master Theodore used and defended the title, upheld the preacher who had condemned it, with the result that Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, wrote him a vigorous protest.

Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril was a good match for Nestorius in his intolerance and zeal, but was a sounder theologian. In the earlier years of his episcopate he had failed to check, if he had not instigated, the unseemly outrages of Christians of Alexandria against the heathen and Jewish population, and particularly the brutal murder by the mob of Hypatia, a talented and highly esteemed lady who was head of a school of Greek philosophy in the city.

The tendencies of theological thought in Alexandria and Antioch differed greatly, although all accepted the Nicene Creed. The temper of Antioch, much like that of modern Germany, was historical, scientific and rational, while that of Alexandria was spiritual and mystical. Their methods of scriptural interpretation are thus contrasted by Dr. DuBose: "At Antioch the question was, what did the

human authors intend to say ; at Alexandria, what did the Holy Ghost mean to convey." In Antioch they approached the mystery of the Word made Flesh from the human side, and tried to show how the man Christ Jesus is truly the Son of God. At Alexandria they started with the recognition of His eternal godhead and proceeded to show how he was truly man. Is it any wonder then that to the Alexandrian mind the rejection of the title " Mother of God " seemed to strike at the essential Divinity of the Son of Mary ? If Mary was not rightly called Theotokos, Cyril argued, her Son was in no true sense Emmanuel.

Cyril's second letter to Nestorius, which by its acceptance by General Councils may be regarded as an authoritative exposition of the faith, makes it clear that there was no association of two persons in Christ, as the teaching of Nestorius implied, but while the divine and human natures remained unchanged the Godhead and the manhood constituted one Christ. " In this sense," he says, " the fathers ventured to call the Holy Virgin Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word, of His Divinity, received a beginning of existence from her, but because in her was formed, and animated with a reasonable soul, that sacred body to which the Word united himself."

A local council at Rome and another at Alexandria condemned the errors of Nestorius, and John, Bishop of Antioch, did his best to bring him to reason, but in vain, and when there was no prospect of peace the Emperor Theodosius II summoned a General Council to meet at Ephesus in June, 431, to bring about some settlement of the controversy.

The Council of Ephesus

The story of the Council is not pleasant reading. Nestorius was undoubtedly deserving of censure for his teaching, but he had scant justice done him and was condemned with indecent haste. About 150 bishops were present when the Council opened. Cyril, by virtue of the dignity of his See, presided and dominated the Council. Nestorius refused to appear until John of Antioch should arrive, and allowed judgment to go against him by default. Some of his friends urged him to recede from his position, but he asserted that a child of two or three years could not

be called God. The Eastern bishops, some thirty or forty in number, of whom the best known were John of Antioch, and Theodoret, were late in arriving, for they had a long journey overland which involved six weeks' travelling for some of them, and they were delayed by accidents and bad weather, but Cyril did not wait for them, and when they reached Ephesus the question was already decided, and Nestorius was condemned and deposed. The representatives of Rome were also late, but they assented to the acts of the Council, which the Syrian bishops refused to do, and the two parties left Ephesus with bitter feelings towards each other. To Cyril's credit, however, it should be said that he was anxious for peace so long as it could be secured without compromising the truth, and through the intervention of a bishop who was on good terms with both parties Cyril and John were reconciled in 433. Nestorius was banished and, after suffering much hardship and ill-treatment, died in Upper Egypt in 439.

There was quite a strong party, however, of those who would not accept the decision of Ephesus because they thought that Nestorius had not been fairly treated. Finding no sympathy within the Empire they took refuge in Persia, where they exercised considerable influence and produced several men of learning, and there is a Nestorian community in existence at the present day.

Theodoret

More than a passing glance should be given to the "blessed Theodoret," of whom the writer in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* says, "There is no name in ecclesiastical history which more commands at once our admiration, our respect and our affection." He was a native of Antioch and was made a lector (with authority to read the Scriptures in public) while still a boy. He received a liberal education, becoming master of Greek, Syriac and Hebrew, and afterwards came under the theological training of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the friend of Chrysostom. When he was about twenty-seven he entered a monastery and there spent some seven years, until he was called to the episcopate in 423. His bishopric was Cyrrhus, a small and singularly unattractive town in Eastern Syria, where almost every kind of error seemed to

flourish. He laboured unremittingly to bring all classes to the knowledge of the truth, and in a letter written A.D. 449, he says, "I have done pastoral duty in 800 churches, and our flock is delivered from heresy and error. He who sees all things knows how many stones have been cast at me by evil heretics, how many conflicts in most of the cities of the East I have waged against pagans, against Jews, against every heresy."

He had a rare gift of eloquence and was much in demand as special preacher at Antioch and elsewhere. When the Nestorian controversy arose, though to some extent he sympathized with Nestorius and looked at things from his point of view, he counselled him to give up his objection to the term "Theotokos," and like John of Antioch he ranged himself on the side of orthodoxy soon after the Council of Ephesus and repudiated Nestorius. Yet, as his biographer says, "he exhibits a large loving human heart which draws out not only our interest but our affection for one who found it so hard to believe anything but what is good of friends he had long known and loved, or to give them up when theological consistency demanded it of him."

Eutyches

The agreement between Cyril and John of Antioch, which was concurred in by Theodoret, did not put an end to the dispute, which broke out again after the death of Cyril in 444. His successor Dioscorus thought he had inherited from Cyril the right to be the defender of orthodoxy. He is described as "an incarnation of St. Cyril's least saintly characteristics." He was keen in his search for heresy, which he thought he should find lurking in the province of Antioch. He had suspicions concerning the teaching of Theodoret, and as he was able to bring influence to bear upon the Emperor Theodosius, who was a weak monarch, secured an imperial order that Theodoret should not leave his own diocese. Neither Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, nor Domnus, the new Archbishop of Antioch, shared his fears, but he secured an ally in Eutyches, an aged archimandrite (or ruler of a monastery) in Constantinople, who, in his zeal against Nestorianism, went to the opposite extreme. A charge of error was brought against Eutyches, and as there happened

to be a local council of bishops at Constantinople at the time, Eutyches was summoned to attend, and when he came he practically denied that our Lord had any real human nature by declaring that though He was produced from two natures, after the Incarnation was effected there was only one. As he persisted in this statement he was deposed from his office and excommunicated.

Leo the Great

The Bishop of Rome at this time was Leo the Great, who has been called "the first Pope" because of the claims of jurisdiction over East and West which he made as the successor of St. Peter. Little is known of his early life. He succeeded Sixtus as Bishop of Rome in 440. He was a man of lofty aims and of great strength of character, and with a capacity for leadership at a time when strong men were singularly lacking both in Church and state, and when he was called to rule over the Church in the ancient centre of empire he made the most of his office, and is justly regarded as "the true founder of the mediæval papacy in all its magnificence of conception and uncompromising strength." It was not enough that he should rank first among the patriarchs, but Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch must all acknowledge allegiance to Rome. He was more imperious than the emperor himself, and when he took the ground that all difficult questions were to be referred to him no one seemed to question that this was the best thing to do.

It is interesting to note in connection with Leo that he is supposed to have been the inventor of that peculiarly Western form of prayer, the Collect, and several of those in our Prayer Book, particularly the Collects for the third Sunday after Easter, the fifth, ninth, thirteenth, fourteenth Sundays after Trinity, are taken from the Sacramentary of St. Leo.

The Tome of St. Leo

After the condemnation of Eutyches, both he and Flavian wrote to Leo, who, after hearing both sides, found Eutyches to be in the wrong, and wrote a letter to Flavian, which has become famous as the *Tome of St. Leo*, expounding very clearly and particularly the doctrine of the

Incarnation. He speaks here of Eutyches as a worthy man in his priestly office, but very imprudent and ignorant, "an old man according to the flesh, but a child in understanding." Here are some of the statements of the *Tome*: "Without detriment to the properties of either nature which came together in one person, majesty took on humility, strength weakness, eternity mortality!"; "Both natures retain their own proper character without loss"; "Being invisible in His own nature, He became visible in ours"; "The humility of manhood and the loftiness of the Godhead both meet there; for as God is not changed by showing pity, so man is not swallowed up by the dignity." St. Leo has well been called "the one great theologian among the popes."

The Robber Council

Though both Leo and Flavian disapproved of such a course, the Emperor was persuaded by Dioscorus to summon a General Council to be held at Ephesus in 449. This has since been known by the name which Leo gave it of the *Latrocinium* or *Robber Council* from the violence and injustice with which it was conducted. Dioscorus presided without even a pretence of impartiality. The accuser of Eutyches, Eusebius of Dorylæum, was not given a hearing and Flavian was shouted down when he attempted to speak. Eutyches was acquitted; Eusebius, Flavian and Theodoret were deposed, and a scene of wild confusion followed. A band of soldiers was brought in by Dioscorus to enforce his will. The bishops who were unwilling to take side against Flavian and Theodoret were threatened with exile and beaten by the soldiers, and Flavian, after being sentenced to exile, was so brutally treated by Eutychian monks, who kicked and beat him, that he died three days later from the effect of his injuries.

Theodosius, the Emperor, died the following year and was succeeded by his sister Pulcheria, who married a senator, Marcian, and raised him to the imperial throne. After consultation with Leo, he thought it wise to order a General Council to be held in 451 at Chalcedon, just across the Bosphorus from Constantinople. There were about 600 bishops present, but the only representatives of the West were two African bishops and the three representatives

of Leo. These latter demanded in the name of Leo that Dioscorus be not allowed to sit in the Council. The imperial commissioners declined to send him out, but gave him a seat by himself. Eusebius of Dorylæum made a formal complaint of the way in which he and Flavian had been treated at Ephesus, and the acts of the late Council were ordered to be read. Bishops who had been there disavowed the acts of the Latrocinium, saying, " None of us signed willingly ; we were overawed by the soldiers." After examination Dioscorus was deposed. The letter of Leo to Flavian, which had been suppressed at Ephesus, was read and assented to as a correct statement of the Catholic doctrine. The Creed of Nicæa was ratified as also the Fuller Creed, which is substantially the " Nicene Creed " now in general use. Theodoret and the other bishops who had been unjustly deposed were restored to office.

Many who had sympathized with Dioscorus and Eutyches refused to accept the decisions of the Council. The monks, particularly of Syria and Egypt, rose in revolt, and at Antioch a monk named Peter the Fuller, who belonged to that party, succeeded in displacing the orthodox occupant of the patriarchal chair. These dissentients became known as " Monophysites," or believers in " one nature only," and the Copts of Egypt, the Abyssinians and the Syrian churches of India and Mesopotamia are their modern representatives.

The Henoticon

Acacius, a man whose ability had attracted the attention of the Emperor, became Patriarch of Constantinople in 471. He had more of the spirit of a statesman than of a Churchman, and he was desirous of restoring unity in the East, and also of making Constantinople, instead of Rome, the centre of authority for Alexandria and Antioch. In the year 482 there were rival claimants for the patriarchal throne of Alexandria. Rome favoured the orthodox candidate, but Acacius gave his support to Peter Mongus, an unscrupulous man and a Monophysite, who said that if he was confirmed in the See he could reconcile the discordant factions at Alexandria. As a means of bringing about the desired unity Acacius persuaded the Emperor Zeno to put forth a statement of doctrine known as the Henoticon (or Form of Union), based upon the first three

General Councils, but carefully avoiding all disputed terms and phrases. But it had not the desired effect. The West would have nothing to do with it at all. In the East many accepted it because subscription to it was made a condition of holding any ecclesiastical position. The orthodox disliked it because it did not distinctly set forth the two natures in Christ, the Monophysites disliked it because it did not repudiate the Council of Chalcedon, and there was a strong feeling against the presumption of the Emperor in intruding into spiritual matters by issuing a formula of faith in his own name. It was the beginning of that doctrine of the supremacy of the State over the Church which in later ages came to be called Erastianism. The Henoticon kept the Churches of the East and West apart for about forty years, until, under an orthodox emperor, it ceased to be enforced and became a dead letter.

Pope Gelasius

It was during the period of division caused by the Henoticon that Gelasius came to the Roman See, which he filled from 492 to 496. Acacius was now dead and his successor was desirous of healing the schism, but Gelasius would have nothing less than a recognition of the supreme and universal authority of the Pope over the whole Church by divine right as the successor of St. Peter. The approval of the See of Rome, he claimed, was the sole test of what was right, and councils were only to express the Church's assent to that which the Pope had already decreed.

Gelasius was not the theologian that Leo was, but some things in his writings are of interest, as being at variance with subsequent Roman teaching. Thus he strongly condemned communion in one kind, and directed that those who would not receive the entire sacrament should be excluded from communion ; for " a division of one and the same mystery cannot take place without great sacrilege." Again, writing against the Eutychian teaching that the human nature of Christ was absorbed in the Divine, he speaks concerning the Eucharist in a way that can hardly be reconciled with the doctrine of transubstantiation. " The sacraments of the body and blood of Christ which we take are a divine thing," he says, " inasmuch as through them we are made partakers of the divine nature ; yet the

substance or nature of bread and wine does not cease to be. And surely an image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the act of the mysteries." " And as the elements by the operation of the Holy Spirit pass into this substance, namely, a divine one, yet remain in the propriety of their own nature, so is the principal mystery itself, the essence and virtue of which they represent to us."

The *Sacramentary* of Gelasius is one of the most ancient service books of the Western Church, and is one of the sources from which our Prayer Book is derived. Amongst the prayers attributed to him are the " Prayer for the Clergy and People," and the second and third Collects for Evensong. He also wrote some hymns in imitation of those of St. Ambrose.

He issued a number of *Decretals*, one of which calls for the observance of " the ancient rule " for the division of the Church's revenues and offerings into four parts—one for the bishop, one for the clergy, one for the poor, and one for the building and maintenance of churches.

CHAPTER XI

The Baptism of Clovis

THE year that Gelasius died was marked by an event of great importance in the West—the baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks. Clovis was son of King Childeric, whom he succeeded in 481. A few years later he married a Burgundian princess, Clotilda, who was a devout Christian. Her efforts to win her husband to Christianity were ineffectual, but when he was fighting against the Germans his army was hard pressed and in danger of defeat and Clovis, looking up to heaven, invoked the aid of Christ, declaring that if he was victorious he would be baptized. The tide of battle turned and the Germans fled, and in fulfilment of his promise he was baptized at Reims, with impressive ceremonies, by Bishop Remigius on Christmas Day, A.D. 496, and three thousand of his soldiers with him. When they entered the church, with its many tapers, its rich decorations and its sweet perfumes, he asked if this was the Kingdom of God which was promised him. "No," said the good bishop, "it is only the beginning of the way to it."

Clovis was then the only Catholic prince, for the other Western princes held an Arian form of Christianity, and the Eastern emperor favoured the Monophysites, and hence the Kings of France derived the title "Eldest Son of the Church." There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his conversion because he failed consistently to live up to his Christian profession. He was not singular in that.

Monasticism

The growth of monasticism in the fifth and sixth centuries is remarkable, and at the present day, when circumstances are so different, it is hard for us to estimate this movement

at its true value. Was it a healthy growth or not ? If there is a general feeling now that

> "We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
> Our neighbor and our work farewell,"

there was an equally widespread feeling fifteen hundred years ago that retirement from the world was almost a necessity for those who would live a religious life. And there was some reason for this feeling. When Christianity became the recognized religion of the Roman Empire, the mass of the people were unconverted. They had not learned Christ. Many of them still professed heathenism, or were Christians in name only. Then Arianism, which was widely prevalent in the West, seems to have had but little moral force. Superstition and gross immorality still maintained their hold upon the people, and it was not unnatural that men should feel that to escape the contamination of the world they must flee to the wilderness. Sometimes this great renunication was accompanied by an extravagant asceticism which approximated to that of the fakirs of India, as, for example, when Simeon Stylites spent thirty years on the top of a pillar which he had built for himself in the vicinity of Antioch. Yet his fame as a man of God spread far and wide ; multitudes sought him out and listened to his teaching, and he wrote letters of reproof to the Emperors Theodosius II and Leo I and the Empress Eudoxia, and they gave heed to his admonitions. The monastic life certainly trained many who were saints in the highest sense of the word. St. Sabas, founder of the monastery which still stands in the Jordan valley and is known as the Convent of Mar Sabas, lived for a time in a cavern by himself, but his sincere piety and unaffected simplicity attracted others to him until he became the head of a large community and was recognized as the " Light of Palestine." He died A.D. 531 at the age of 91 years.

It was from the monasteries, too, that bishops were generally chosen. Cæsarius, called from the monastery of Lerins to be Bishop of Arles in 502, proved a true father in God to his people, guarding them from erroneous and strange doctrines, teaching them to take a more intelligent part in the worship, and helping them to live godly, righteous and sober lives. Fulgentius, too, was taken from his beloved

monastery almost by force to be made Bishop of Ruspe in North Africa in 508, at a time when the Church was sorely oppressed by the persecutions of the Vandal rulers of the country, who were Arians. So greatly was he honoured and beloved that many of the Arian party were brought over to the Church. He was twice banished; but he continued to do good work by his writings in defence of the faith. He had his peculiarities. He still continued to live the monastic life as far as possible, and in his coarse clothing, with a leathern girdle about his loins, was said to be more like a Hebrew prophet than a Christian bishop. It was in the days before the clergy wore any distinctive vestments in their ministrations, but they generally put on the best they had, and bishops wore a special scarf, and it is noted that Fulgentius declined to wear this but celebrated in the very tunic in which he used to sleep, saying it was the heart and not the clothes which ought to be changed.

St. Benedict

The great reformer and organizer of Western monasticism was St. Benedict who was born at Nursia in Italy about A.D. 480. His parents were people of the better class, and he was sent to Rome to be educated. Though he was only a boy, he was shocked by the immorality of his companions and fled to a cave at Subiaco, forty miles from Rome, where he lived the life of a hermit for some years, his retreat being known at first only to a neighbouring priest who visited him frequently. His fame, however, spread, and a community of monks invited him to become their head. He consented, but his residence among them was short, for they hated to be reformed, and after they had attempted to poison him he retired to his cave again. Many resorted to him there, some of them young nobles from Rome, and asked to become his disciples, and here he founded twelve monasteries, each with twelve monks, with himself as general abbot. Driven away from here in 528 by the jealousy of a secular priest, he built a new monastery at Monte Cassino, and the following year he drew up the famous "Benedictine Rule." The monastery grew rapidly, and before the death of the founder the system was established in Gaul, Sicily and Spain. Though St. Benedict used to preach, there is no evidence that he was ever

ordained. He died in the year 543 on the 21st of March, on which day he is commemorated in our calendar.

The Benedictine Rule

Before St. Benedict's day Western monasteries had each its own rule, some of them based upon the Greek rule of St. Basil, and others upon that of John Cassian, but the Benedictine Rule, like Aaron's rod, soon swallowed up the others. This fact was due entirely to the intrinsic merits of that rule, which was characterized by a mildness and consideration quite foreign to the severity of the Eastern rules. Benedict found a good deal of laxity and disorder in the monasteries of his day, and this he set himself to overcome. He laid down strict requirements that everyone desiring to enter upon the monastic life must go through at least a year's novitiate, and during this period of probation must become familiar with the Rule, that he might fully realize its obligations before taking the vows. Each monastery was to have an abbot elected by the brethren, whose rule was to be absolute. The allowance of food was fixed, but those doing hard work were allowed extra, at the discretion of the abbot, and special consideration was to be shown to the sick and infirm. There were eight services a day, the first being two hours after midnight, and the Psalter was so divided as to be read through once a week. On Sundays and holy days all the brethren were to receive the Holy Communion. The day was so mapped out that there was no unoccupied time ; but after the midday meal a brother might take a nap or read a book. The distinctive feature of the Rule was the substitution, under certain restrictions, of study for manual labour, thus giving an encouragement to literary pursuits and enabling the monasteries to become the centres of learning throughout the Middle Ages. Cases of disobedience were severely punished, the extreme penalty, after repeated offences, being expulsion from the Order.

Justinian

The accession of Justinian to the imperial throne was an event of great importance in the history of the Church. He was the first emperor after Theodosius the Great who had the qualifications to make him a leader in the Church.

He had received a good education, which included law and theology, and he first came into prominence in the reign of his uncle Justin, who was an illiterate soldier, and was advanced in years when he came to the throne in A.D. 518. Justin left the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs in the hands of his nephew, who was made co-emperor in 521 and became sole emperor in 527. The same year he married a beautiful and clever woman named Theodora, by whom he was largely influenced. Through the military skill of the famous General Belisarius he extended his rule both in the West and in the East, and he erected a number of beautiful and costly buildings, chief of which was the great Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople. He regarded himself as the defender of the faith, and his first care was to heal the breach between Rome and Constantinople which had followed the Henoticon. Another ambition was to reconcile the Monophysites to the Church, and he was persuaded that to this end it was necessary to secure the condemnation of certain treatises which were regarded by the Monophysites as Nestorian. There were writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa, which are commonly called the "Three Chapters."

Justinian accordingly issued an imperial edict in 544, condemning these. This met with much disfavour, particularly in Rome, and the Pope Vigilius, who was a weak and vacillating man, was promptly summoned to Constantinople. He was in a dilemna, but he could not disobey. It is said that he owed his appointment to the Empress Theodora, who was in sympathy with the Monophysites, and was under a promise to support the scheme; but he knew the Western Church was against it. He issued what in modern days would be called a Bull against the imperial edict, but subsequently revoked it.

The Fifth General Council

Justinian then determined to summon a General Council to deal with the matter, and it met at Constantinople in May, 553. There were 156 bishops present, nearly all from the East.

Vigilius, who was in the city, would not attend, making an excuse of indisposition. The Council, which is accounted the *Fifth General Council*, after ratifying the acts of the

four preceding councils, formally condemned the "Three Chapters." A few months later, Vigilius yielded his assent to the decisions of the Council, but it was several years before it was generally received in the West.

Another famous work of Justinian was his codification of Roman laws. This collection of civil law was used throughout the empire for three centuries and is the foundation of the laws of Italy, France and Germany. Justinian died in 565.

St. Columba

It was while Justinian was still reigning in the East that in far off Britain St. Columba laid the foundations of the famous monastery of Iona. Columba came of a noble Irish family, and was born about 521. He was educated at Moville under St. Finnian, the patron saint of Ulster. He was ordained in 544 and displayed great zeal in missionary work in his own land, founding several religious houses there. Various reasons are given for his leaving Ireland, the most picturesque of which is that, after he had copied with great pains a beautiful Psalter belonging to St. Finnian, the owner of the original claimed that he should have the copy also, but Columba would not give it up. The dispute was referred to King Diarmid, who decided against Columba; but he, smarting under a sense of injustice and giving way to his quick, Celtic temper, incited the people to rebellion, and a battle was fought, known as the "Battle of the Psalter," in which Diarmid was defeated. Columba was censured by a synod which was held after this, and was charged to win to Christ as many pagan souls as the number of Christians whose death he had caused. He left Ireland in 563 in a coracle of wicker-work covered with hides, and landed with twelve companions on the little island of Hy, or Iona, off the coast of Argyllshire, and here he built his monastery which was to be a centre from which to preach the Gospel to the Picts. Other monasteries were soon established, but they were all under the rule of Iona. It is noted as a peculiarity that St. Columba, though only a priest, exercised a sort of episcopal authority over the whole province, and although there were bishops sometimes at the monasteries —presumably for ordination and confirmation—they were subject to the abbot of Iona.

After thirty-four years of active work here, Columba passed to his rest on June 9th, 597, the very year in which the Roman mission under Augustine set foot on the shores of Kent. Iona, according to the estimate of the French writer Montalembert, " was for two centuries the nursery of bishops, the centre of education, the asylum of religious knowledge, the point of union among the British Isles, the capital and necropolis of the Celtic race. Numerous kings and princes were buried there at the feet of Columba."

CHAPTER XII

St. Gregory the Great

IT is doubtful whether in the whole course of ecclesiastical history there is a name more worthy to be held in honour than that of St. Gregory the Great, the last of the four Latin Doctors, and, as Dr. Bright calls him, "the greatest and most lovable of Roman bishops." His ideals of his sacred office were high, and he set himself, with all humility, and with faith in the enabling power of God's grace, to fulfil them.

Born about the middle of the sixth century of a wealthy senatorial family, he received the education of a Roman gentleman, practised law for a time, and, when he was about the age of thirty, was nominated by the Emperor to an important civic position, and filled the office with much credit. His religious aspirations, however, were not satisfied with a secular life, and after the death of his father, he spent most of the wealth that came to him in founding religious houses. On the site of his own house on the Cælian Hill he built a monastery, dedicated to St. Andrew, which he entered as a monk, and in his religious zeal he practised such asceticism as to endanger his life. But he was not allowed to stay here long. He was just the sort of man that the Pope (Benedict I) wanted as his deputy at the imperial court at Constantinople, and he was sent there as a deacon, where he spent several years, discharging the duties of his office with great efficiency.

In the year 585 he was glad to be allowed to return to his quiet monastery at Rome, of which he was appointed abbot. While holding this office, however, he had to act as secretary to Pope Pelagius II, at whose death in 590 he was unanimously elected by the clergy and people of Rome to be Pope—the first monk, it is said, to be raised to that position.

Gregory did his best to escape from the dignity. He fled from the city and hid himself, and he wrote to the Emperor imploring him to veto the election, for he loved the monastic life and feared the distractions and temptations of a position of such prominence. But in spite of his protests he was raised to the episcopate on September 3rd, 590, and at once applied himself with all diligence to fulfil the duties of his office.

The condition of the Western Church was such as might well deter a strong man from undertaking its direction. The Lombards who were Arians were ravaging Italy and threatening Rome itself, and the Emperor was appealed to in vain for aid against them; the Tiber had flooded its banks, bringing plague and famine; in Africa the Donatists were making fresh trouble; Spain was only imperfectly recovered from Arianism; discipline was lax both amongst the clergy and in the monasteries; the papacy had been for years under the domination of the Emperor; men's hearts were failing them for fear and the belief was prevalent that the end of the world was at hand. Gregory himself compared the Church to "an old and badly shattered ship, letting in the water on all sides, its timbers rotten, shaken by storms every day and sounding of wreck." But his courage rose to the occasion. Thanks to his early training, he was not a mere ecclesiastic; he was in the best sense a man of the world as well. He knew what ought to be done and he did it. In addition to his "care of all the churches," he had a number of secular duties as well, and the general charge of the city seems to have devolved upon him. Then there were estates in various quarters, known as the "patrimony of St. Peter," which had to be managed, and this required a knowledge of business methods. He promptly took measures to restore discipline, to repress heresy, to reform abuses and to defend the prerogatives of his office. Undoubtedly his wise administration did much to strengthen and extend the position of the Roman See, but his idea of papal jurisdiction was more restricted than that of Leo, or that of later days.

"Universal Bishop"

Gregory entertained no doubt that Rome was the See of St. Peter, and that in consequence its bishop held the

first place amongst the bishops of Christendom, but he recognized the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem as of the same rank as himself. "In position you are my brothers," he writes to the Bishop of Alexandria, "in character my fathers." He reproved John of Constantinople for allowing himself to be addressed as "Universal Bishop," a title, he said, which his own predecessors had repudiated. "Not one of them has ever wished to be called by such a title, or seized upon this ill-advised name, lest if, in virtue of the rank of the pontificate, he took to himself the glory of singularity, he might seem to have denied it to all his brethren." And again, "If one patriarch is called 'Universal,' the name of Patriarch in the case of the rest is abrogated."

His Care for the Church

While Gregory cannot be considered a great theologian, he had a good grasp of the received orthodox doctrine, and his writings were of practical value to the Church. The most famous of them all is his *Pastoral Rule*, which was so highly esteemed that one of the patriarchs of Antioch translated it into Greek for use in the Eastern Churches, and our own King Alfred himself translated it into Anglo-Saxon. Preaching he considered the most important duty of the priest, and he was himself a brilliant and forceful preacher.

He did a great deal, too, for the improvement of the services of the Church, revising and enriching the Sacramentary of his predecessor Gelasius, founding schools of singers and reforming the somewhat crude music of the time. The "Gregorian Tones" derive their name from him.

The Mission of Augustine

From an English Churchman's point of view the chief importance of St. Gregory is his work in the evangelization of England—"Gregory our father," who "sent us baptism." He may be justly accounted the founder of the Church of England, as distinct from the more ancient British Church, which survived only in Wales and Cornwall. The story of his interest in the fair-haired English lads in the slave-market in Rome is so well known that it is unnecessary

to repeat it. This was while he was still a deacon. He obtained permission from the Pope to go himself to preach the Gospel to the Angles, but so great was the popular outcry against his leaving Rome that he was obliged to forgo his mission. After he was made Pope, however, he determined to carry out his purpose, and in 596 he sent the provost of his own monastery, Augustine, with several other monks to undertake the work, giving them letters to the bishops of Gaul whom they would visit on their way. They set out, but the stories they heard in France of the fierceness of the people, whose language they did not know, and of the hardships they would have to undergo, disheartened them, and they sent Augustine back to ask Gregory to allow them to return. But Gregory bade them go on, and, appointing Augustine as abbot, gave him fresh letters, including one to Ethelbert, King of Kent, who had married a Christian princess, Bertha, daughter of the King of Paris. The party wintered in Gaul and, crossing the Channel, landed safely on the Isle of Thanet in Easter week 597, and a few days later had their first audience with the English King. It was a memorable meeting. As a safeguard against magic the King had his seat set in the open air, and the procession of monks approached singing a litany and carrying a silver cross, and a painted picture of the crucifixion, Augustine, who was taller than the others, coming last. Augustine then delivered his message, speaking through an interpreter, and telling how the Saviour by His sufferings redeemed the world and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. It was a simple presentation of the Gospel. The King listened attentively. It could not have been entirely new to him, for the Queen had brought with her Bishop Luidhard as chaplain, and the little church of St. Martin at Canterbury, which was built in the days of the Roman occupation, and which is still standing, had been restored for use as her chapel. It was natural that Ethelbert did not wish to give up the customs of his forefathers without consideration, but he treated the missionaries kindly, giving them a house to live in, the free use of St. Martin's Church, and full liberty to preach to the people.

Many embraced the faith, and on the eve of Whit-Sunday of the same year, Ethelbert himself, a convert to the truth of Christ, received baptism, that " he might be born again

into the new infancy of true innocence." The example of the King and his nobles naturally affected the people, and the Christian community grew so quickly that it needed the care of a bishop, and Augustine, according to Gregory's instructions, went over to Gaul and was consecrated by Virgilius of Arles and other bishops on November 16th, 597, to be "Archbishop of the English." Fixing his episcopal seat at Canterbury he became the first of that long line of Archbishops of Canterbury which has come down in unbroken succession from his time to the present day.

St. Augustine's Episcopate

On the Christmas Day after his return, more than ten thousand were baptized, but there is room for doubt as to the genuineness of the conversion of some after the movement became popular. Ethelbert showed his favour to the new bishop by giving him his own palace and the ruins of an old Roman church close by, which was rebuilt and became the original Christ Church Cathedral—"the mother-church of English Christianity." Augustine also built a monastery just outside the walls, close to where St. Augustine's College now stands, and its foundations may be seen there now.

Augustine sent two messengers to Rome with a full report of the mission and a letter in which he asked Gregory's advice on a number of points concerning which he was in doubt. For some unexplained reason it was three years before they returned, and then Gregory sent with them several other priests for the work, three of whom, Mellitus, Justus and Paulinus, afterwards became bishops. They reached Kent safely in 601, bringing with them from the Pope the gift of a pall (pallium). This was a garment of white woollen material in the form of a scarf, worn over the shoulders with one end hanging down in front and the other behind, which was given as a mark of honour, first by emperors to patriarchs, then by popes—originally in the Emperor's name—to certain metropolitan bishops, and was a mark of special connection with the papal See. In a later age it came to be regarded as a token of archi-episcopal authority conferred by the Pope. The pall appears in the arms of the See of Canterbury. Gregory

also sent a number of books, and holy vessels and altar-cloths and other church ornaments.

Augustine's questions were answered in detail. Amongst other things he had asked what form of service he should use for his English converts, and Gregory tells him he is under no obligation to follow the same customs he had known at Rome; but if he found any usages in Gaul or elsewhere which he thought helpful that he should not hesitate to introduce them.

Gregory also—over-stretching his rightful authority—gave him jurisdiction over the bishops of the British Church, whom he speaks of as ignorant and corrupt. Augustine, apparently, had let five years go by without troubling to make the acquaintance of his brethren at the western side of the island; but there were probably political difficulties in the way and little intercourse between the Britons and their Teuton conquerors; but in 602 or 603 a meeting was arranged somewhere on the borders of Wessex with the bishops of such ancient Sees as Bangor, Llandaff and St. Asaph, who had acknowledged St. David as their metropolitan.

It is perhaps unprofitable to speculate as to what would have taken place if St. Gregory himself had been there in place of Augustine. His wisdom and tact and kindliness were sadly needed. The conference was a failure. Augustine seemed to the British bishops haughty, overbearing and unsympathetic. Yet that was more the fault of his training than anything else. He was a monk, and had had but little experience in pastoral work, and it was hard for him to put himself in the position of those who did not know Rome and had never acknowledged its jurisdiction. They kept Easter according to a system of reckoning which was out of date long before Augustine was born; they did not perform baptism as the Romans did, and they shaved their heads in a peculiar fashion which made them look ridiculous. Should he, coming with the authority of the Apostolic See, as Archbishop of all Britain, place himself on a level with these simple Britons? Two conferences were held, but no agreement was reached, and Augustine went home disappointed. It is unfair to say that the fault was all on his side. One thing which he required was that they should join with him in his efforts to evangelize the English; but

this they had made no attempt to do before Augustine came, and they could not bring themselves to undertake it now. Augustine is said to have warned them on leaving that if they would not preach the way of life to the English they should suffer deadly vengeance at their hands, and it was less than ten years later that a terrible massacre of priests and monks took place at Bangor Iscoed at the hands of the heathen King Ethelfrid of Northumbria.

Augustine extended his work by consecrating Mellitus as Bishop of London and Justus Bishop of Rochester. London was an episcopal See at least two hundred years earlier and had only been vacant since the British were driven out half a century before. When he felt that his end was near, deeming such a step necessary to ensure the future success of the mission, he consecrated Laurence, a priest who had come with him from Rome, and had been his messenger to Gregory, to be his successor.

Death of St. Augustine

St. Gregory, justly surnamed "the Great," died on March 12th, 604, and on May 29th of the same year, according to most authorities, Augustine was called to his rest. It would be unfair to compare the two men without taking into account the different environment in which they lived. It was Gregory who must have known him well, who selected Augustine for the work which he himself had hoped to undertake, and doubtless he made the best choice possible. But while Gregory was a man of affairs, accustomed to deal with men of different ranks and of different nationalities, Augustine's experience was confined within the walls of his monastery, where all was done by rule, and the wonder is that, coming as he did to take up missionary work amongst a strange people, he was able to lay his foundations as wisely as he did. It was no ordinary man who could, in a few short months, win over to the faith an English king and thousands of his subjects, as much, we are told, by the pure life of himself and his followers as by his preaching. And with all his reverence for Gregory he could act upon his own judgment when circumstances required it, as he did when he made Canterbury the metropolitan See, instead of London as Gregory had directed. He had difficulties to face which it is

impossible for us to understand, and if he made mistakes so did Gregory and so did the Apostles themselves. He was diligent, faithful and devout, and he gave himself whole-heartedly for the service of Christ and the Church, and when we "praise famous men and our fathers that begat us," there are few of the worthies of the English Church who can justly claim a higher place than St. Augustine of Canterbury.

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